

FRANK R. STOCKTON

VOLUME VI

THE GREAT WAR SYNDICATE, ETC.


Walter Russell

"The Crab now backed, still holding the crushed propeller in its iron grasp."

From a drawing by WALTER RUSSELL.

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THE NOVELS AND STORIES OF
FRANK R. STOCKTON

THE GREAT WAR SYNDICATE, ETC.



NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1900

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12-39187

FIRST COPY,

1438
Jan. 16. 1900.

THE DE VINNE PRESS.

E.G.H. Aug. 31/12

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THE GREAT WAR SYNDICATE

THE GREAT WAR SYNDICATE

IN the spring of a certain year, not far from the close of the nineteenth century, when the political relations between the United States and Great Britain became so strained that careful observers on both sides of the Atlantic were forced to the belief that a serious break in these relations might be looked for at any time, the fishing-schooner *Eliza Drum* sailed from a port in Maine for the banks of Newfoundland.

It was in this year that a new system of protection for American fishing-vessels had been adopted in Washington. Every fleet of these vessels was accompanied by one or more United States cruisers, which remained on the fishing-grounds, not only for the purpose of warning unwary American craft who might approach too near the three-mile limit, but also to overlook the action of the British naval vessels on the coast, and to interfere, at least by protest, with such seizures of American fishing-boats as might appear to be unjust. In the opinion of all persons of sober judgment, there was nothing in the condition of affairs at this time so dangerous to the peace of the two countries as the presence of these American cruisers in the fishing-waters.

The *Eliza Drum* was late in her arrival on the fishing-grounds, and having, under orders from Washington, reported to the commander of the *Lennehaha*, the United States vessel in charge at that place, her captain and crew went vigorously to work to make up for lost time. They worked so vigorously, and with eyes so single to the catching of fish, that, on the morning of the day after their arrival, they were hauling up cod at a point which, according to the nationality of the calculator, might be two and three quarters or three and one quarter miles from the Canadian coast.

In consequence of this inattention to the apparent extent of the marine mile, the *Eliza Drum*, a little before noon, was overhauled and seized by the British cruiser *Dog-Star*. A few miles away, the *Lennehaha* had perceived the dangerous position of the *Eliza Drum*, and had started toward her to warn her to take a less doubtful position. But, before she arrived, the capture had taken place. When he reached the spot where the *Eliza Drum* had been fishing, the commander of the *Lennehaha* made an observation of the distance from the shore, and calculated it to be more than three miles. When he sent an officer in a boat to the *Dog-Star* to state the result of his computations, the captain of the British vessel replied that he was satisfied the distance was less than three miles, and that he was now about to take the *Eliza Drum* into port.

On receiving this information, the commander of the *Lennehaha* steamed closer to the *Dog-Star*, and informed her captain, by means of a speaking-trumpet, that if he took the *Eliza Drum* into a Canadian port, he

would first have to sail over his ship. To this the captain of the *Dog-Star* replied that he did not in the least object to sailing over the *Lennehaha*, and proceeded to put a prize crew on board the fishing-vessel.

At this juncture the captain of the *Eliza Drum* ran up a large American flag. In five minutes afterwards the captain of the prize crew hauled it down. In less than ten minutes after this the *Lennehaha* and the *Dog-Star* were blazing at each other with their bow guns. The spark had been struck.

The contest was not a long one. The *Dog-Star* was of much greater tonnage and heavier armament than her antagonist, and early in the afternoon she steamed for St. John's, taking with her as prizes both the *Eliza Drum* and the *Lennehaha*.

All that night, at every point in the United States which was reached by telegraph, there burnt a smothered fire, and the next morning, when the regular and extra editions of the newspapers were poured out upon the land, the fire burst into a roaring blaze. From lakes to gulf, from ocean to ocean, on mountain and plain, in city and prairie, it roared and blazed. Parties, sections, politics, were all forgotten. Every American formed part of an electric system—the same fire flashed into every soul. No matter what might be thought on the morrow, or in the coming days which might bring better understanding, this day the unreasoning fire blazed and roared.

With morning newspapers in their hands, men rushed from the breakfast-tables into the streets to meet their fellow-men. What was it that they should do?

Detailed accounts of the affair came rapidly, but

there was nothing in them to quiet the national indignation. The American flag had been hauled down by Englishmen, an American naval vessel had been fired into and captured. That was enough! No matter whether the *Eliza Drum* was within the three-mile limit or not! No matter which vessel fired first! If it were the *Lennehaha*, the more honor to her—she ought to have done it! From platform, pulpit, stump, and editorial office came one vehement, passionate shout directed toward Washington.

Congress was in session, and in its halls the fire roared louder and blazed higher than on mountain or plain, in city or prairie. No member of the government, from President to page, ventured to oppose the tempestuous demands of the people. The day for argument upon the exciting question had been a long and weary one, and it had gone by. In less than a week the great shout of the people was answered by a declaration of war against Great Britain.

When this had been done, those who demanded war breathed easier, but those who must direct the war breathed harder.

It was, indeed, a time for hard breathing, but the great mass of the people perceived no reason why this should be. Money there was in vast abundance. In every State well-drilled men, by thousands, stood ready for the word to march, and the military experience and knowledge given by a great war was yet strong upon the nation.

To the people at large the plan of the war appeared a very obvious and a very simple one. Canada had given the offence: Canada should be made to pay the penalty. In a very short time, one hundred thousand,

two hundred thousand, five hundred thousand men, if necessary, could be made ready for the invasion of Canada. From platform, pulpit, stump, and editorial office came the cry, "On to Canada!"

At the seat of government, however, the plan of the war did not appear so obvious, so simple. Throwing a great army into Canada was all well enough, and that army would probably do well enough. But the question which produced hard breathing in the executive branch of the government was the immediate protection of the sea-coast, Atlantic, Gulf, and even Pacific.

In a storm of national indignation, war had been declared against a power which, at this period of her history, had brought up her naval forces to a point double in strength to that of any other country in the world. And this war had been declared by a nation which, comparatively speaking, possessed no naval strength at all.

For some years the United States navy had been steadily improving, but this improvement was not sufficient to make it worthy of reliance at this crisis. As has been said, there was money enough, and every shipyard in the country could be set to work to build iron-clad men-of-war, but it takes a long time to build ships, and England's navy was afloat. It was the British keel that America had to fear.

By means of the Continental cables, it was known that many of the largest mail-vessels of the British transatlantic lines, which had been withdrawn upon the declaration of war, were preparing in British ports to transport troops to Canada. It was not impossible that these great steamers might land an army in Canada

before an American army could be organized and marched to that province. It might be that the United States would be forced to defend her borders, instead of invading those of the enemy.

In every fort and navy-yard all was activity. The hammering of iron went on by day and by night. But what was to be done when the great ironclads of England hammered upon our defences? How long would it be before the American flag would be seen no more upon the high seas?

It is not surprising that the government found its position one of perilous responsibility. A wrathful nation expected of it more than it could perform.

All over the country, however, there were thoughtful men, not connected with the government, who saw the perilous features of the situation, and day by day these grew less afraid of being considered traitors, and more willing to declare their convictions of the country's danger. Despite the continuance of the national enthusiasm, doubts, perplexities, and fears began to show themselves.

In the States bordering upon Canada a reactionary feeling became evident. Unless the United States Navy could prevent England from rapidly pouring into Canada not only her own troops, but perhaps those of allied nations, these Northern States might become the scene of warfare, and, whatever the issue of the contest, their lands might be ravished, their people suffer.

From many quarters, urgent demands were now pressed upon the government. From the interior there were clamors for troops to be massed on the northern frontier, and from the seaboard cities there

came a cry for ships that were worthy to be called men-of-war—ships to defend the harbors and bays, ships to repel an invasion by sea. Suggestions were innumerable. There was no time to build, it was urged. The government could call upon friendly nations. But wise men smiled sadly at these suggestions. It would be difficult to find a nation desirous of a war with England.

In the midst of the enthusiasms, the fears, and the suggestions, came reports of the capture of American merchantmen by fast British cruisers. These reports made the American people more furious, the American government more anxious.

Almost from the beginning of this period of national turmoil, a party of gentlemen met daily in one of the large rooms in a hotel in New York. At first there were eleven of these men, all from the great Atlantic cities, but their number increased by arrivals from other parts of the country, until at last they numbered twenty-three. These gentlemen were all great capitalists, and accustomed to occupying themselves with great enterprises. By day and by night they met together, with closed doors, until they had matured the scheme they had been considering. As soon as this work was done, a committee was sent to Washington, to submit a plan to the government.

These twenty-three men had formed themselves into a syndicate, with the object of taking entire charge of the war between the United States and Great Britain.

This proposition was an astounding one, but the government was obliged to treat it with respectful consideration. The men who offered it were a power

in the land—a power which no government could afford to disregard.

The plan of the Syndicate was comprehensive, direct, and simple. It offered to assume the entire control and expense of the war, and to effect a satisfactory peace within one year. As a guarantee that this contract would be properly performed, an immense sum of money would be deposited in the Treasury at Washington. Should the Syndicate be unsuccessful, this sum would be forfeited, and it would receive no pay for anything it had done.

The sum to be paid by the government to the Syndicate, should it bring the war to a satisfactory conclusion, would depend upon the duration of hostilities. That is to say, that, as the shorter the duration of the war, the greater would be the benefit to the country, therefore, the larger must be the pay to the Syndicate. According to the proposed contract, the Syndicate would receive, if the war should continue for a year, one quarter the sum stipulated to be paid if peace should be declared in three months.

If, at any time during the conduct of the war by the Syndicate, an American seaport should be taken by the enemy, or a British force landed on any point of the sea-coast, the contract should be considered at an end, and security and payment forfeited. If any point on the northern boundary of the United States should be taken and occupied by the enemy, one million dollars of the deposited security should be forfeited for every such occupation, but the contract should continue.

It was stipulated that the land and naval forces of the United States should remain under the entire

control of the government, but should be maintained as a defensive force, and not brought into action unless any failure on the part of the Syndicate should render such action necessary.

The state of feeling in governmental circles, and the evidences of alarm and distrust which were becoming apparent in Congress and among the people, exerted an important influence in favor of the Syndicate. The government caught at its proposition, not as if it were a straw, but as if it were a life-raft. The men who offered to relieve the executive departments of their perilous responsibilities were men of great ability, prominent positions, and vast resources, whose vast enterprises had already made them known all over the globe. Such men were not likely to jeopardize their reputations and fortunes in a case like this, unless they had well-founded reasons for believing that they would be successful. Even the largest amount stipulated to be paid them in case of success would be less than the ordinary estimates for the military and naval operations which had been anticipated, and in case of failure, the amount forfeited would go far to repair the losses which might be sustained by the citizens of the various States.

At all events, should the Syndicate be allowed to take immediate control of the war, there would be time to put the army and navy, especially the latter, in better condition to carry on the contest, in case of the failure of the Syndicate. Organization and construction might still go on, and, should it be necessary, the army and navy could step into the contest, fresh and well prepared.

All branches of the government united in accepting

the offer of the Syndicate. The contract was signed, and the world waited to see what would happen next.

The influence which for years had been exerted by the interests controlled by the men composing the Syndicate, had its effect in producing a popular confidence in the power of the members of the Syndicate to conduct a war as successfully as they had conducted other gigantic enterprises. Therefore, although predictions of disaster came from many quarters, the American public appeared willing to wait with but moderate impatience for the result of this novel undertaking.

The government now proceeded to mass troops at important points on the northern frontier. Forts were supplied with men and armaments, all coast defences were put in the best possible condition, the navy was stationed at important ports, and work at the shipyards went on. But, without reference to all this, the work of the Syndicate immediately began.

This body of men were of various politics and of various pursuits in life. But politics were no more regarded in the work they had undertaken than they would have been in the purchase of land or of railroad iron. No manifestoes of motives and intentions were issued to the public. The Syndicate simply went to work. There could be no doubt that early success would be a direct profit to it, but there could also be no doubt that its success would be a vast benefit and profit, not only to the business enterprises in which these men were severally engaged, but to the business of the whole country. To save the United States from a dragging war, and to save themselves from the effects

of it, were the prompting motives for the formation of the Syndicate.

Without hesitation, the Syndicate determined that the war in which it was about to engage should be one of defence by means of offence. Such a war must necessarily be quick and effective. And, with all the force of their fortunes, their minds, and their bodies, its members went to work to wage this war quickly and effectively.

All known inventions and improvements in the art of war had been thoroughly considered by the Syndicate, and by the eminent specialists whom it had enlisted in its service. Certain recently perfected engines of war, novel in nature, were the exclusive property of the Syndicate. It was known, or surmised, in certain quarters, that the Syndicate had secured possession of important warlike inventions, but what they were and how they acted was a secret carefully guarded and protected.

The first step of the Syndicate was to purchase from the United States government ten war-vessels. These were of medium size and in good condition, but they were of an old-fashioned type, and it had not been considered expedient to put them in commission. This action caused surprise and disappointment in many quarters. It had been supposed that the Syndicate, through its agents scattered all over the world, would immediately acquire, by purchase or lease, a fleet of fine ironclads, culled from various maritime powers. But the Syndicate, having no intention of involving, or attempting to involve, other countries in this quarrel, paid no attention to public opinion, and went to work in its own way.

Its vessels, eight of which were on the Atlantic coast and two on the Pacific, were rapidly prepared for the peculiar service in which they were to be engaged. The resources of the Syndicate were great, and in a very short time several of their vessels, already heavily plated with steel, were furnished with an additional outside armor, formed of strips of elastic steel, each reaching from the gunwales nearly to the surface of the water. These strips, about a foot wide, and placed an inch or two apart, were each backed by several powerful air-buffers, so that a ball, striking one or more of them, would be deprived of much of its momentum. The experiments upon the steel spring and buffers adopted by the Syndicate showed that the force of the heaviest cannonading was almost deadened by the powerful elasticity of this armor.

The armament of each vessel consisted of but one gun, of large caliber, placed on the forward deck, and protected by a bomb-proof covering. Each vessel was manned by a captain and crew from the merchant service, from whom no warlike duties were expected. The fighting operations were in charge of a small body of men, composed of two or three scientific specialists, and some practical gunners and their assistants. A few bomb-proof canopies and a curved steel deck completed the defences of the vessel.

Besides equipping this little navy, the Syndicate set about the construction of certain sea-going vessels of an extraordinary kind. So great were the facilities at its command, and so thorough and complete its methods, that ten or a dozen shipyards and foundries were set to work simultaneously to build one of these ships. In a marvellously short time the Syndicate possessed several of them, ready for action.

These vessels became technically known as "crabs." They were not large, and the only part of them which projected above the water was the middle of an elliptical deck, slightly convex, and heavily mailed with ribs of steel. These vessels were fitted with electric engines of extraordinary power, and were capable of great speed. At their bows, fully protected by the overhanging deck, was the machinery by which their peculiar work was to be accomplished. The Syndicate intended to confine itself to marine operations, and, for the present, it was contented with these two classes of vessels.

The armament for each of the large vessels, as has been said before, consisted of a single gun of long range, and the ammunition was confined entirely to a new style of projectile, which had never yet been used in warfare. The material and construction of this projectile were known only to three members of the Syndicate, who had invented and perfected it, and it was on account of their possession of this secret that they had been invited to join that body.

This projectile was not, in the ordinary sense of the word, an explosive, and was named by its inventors the "Instantaneous Motor." It was discharged from an ordinary cannon, but no gunpowder or other explosive compound was used to propel it. The bomb possessed, in itself, the necessary power of propulsion, and the gun was used merely to give it the proper direction.

These bombs were cylindrical in form, and pointed at the outer end. They were filled with hundreds of small tubes, each radiating outward from a central line. Those in the middle third of the bomb pointed directly outward, while those in its front por-

tion were inclined forward at a slight angle, and those in the rear portion backward at the same angle. One tube, at the end of the bomb, and pointing directly backward, furnished the motive power.

Each of these tubes could exert a force sufficient to move an ordinary train of passenger-cars one mile, and this power could be exerted instantaneously, so that the difference in time in the starting of a train at one end of the mile and its arrival at the other would not be appreciable. The difference in concussionary force between a train moving at the rate of a mile in two minutes, or even one minute, and another train which moves a mile in an instant, can easily be imagined.

In these bombs, those tubes which might direct their powers downward or laterally upon the earth were capable of instantaneously propelling every portion of solid ground or rock to a distance of two or three hundred yards, while the particles of objects on the surface of the earth were instantaneously removed to a far greater distance. The tube which propelled the bomb was of a force graduated according to circumstances, and it would carry a bomb to as great a distance as accurate observation for purposes of aim could be made. Its force was brought into action while in the cannon by means of electricity, while the same effect was produced in the other tubes by the concussion of the steel head against the object aimed at.

What gave the tubes their power was the jealously guarded secret.

The method of aiming was as novel as the bomb itself. In this process, nothing depended on the eyesight of the gunner : the personal equation was entirely eliminated. The gun was so mounted that its direction

was accurately indicated by graduated scales. There was an instrument which was acted upon by the dip, rise, or roll of the vessel, and which showed at any moment the position of the gun with reference to the plane of the sea surface.

Before the discharge of the cannon, an observation was taken by one of the scientific men, which accurately determined the distance to the object to be aimed at, and reference to a carefully prepared mathematical table showed to what points on the graduated scales the gun should be adjusted, and the instant that the muzzle of the cannon was in the position that it was when the observation was taken, a button was touched, and the bomb was instantaneously placed on the spot aimed at. The exactness with which the propelling force of the bomb could be determined was an important factor in this method of aiming.

As soon as three of the spring-armored vessels and five crabs were completed, the Syndicate felt itself ready to begin operations. It was, indeed, time. The seas had been covered with American and British merchantmen, hastening homeward, or to friendly ports, before the actual commencement of hostilities. But all had not been fortunate enough to reach safety within the limits of time allowed, and several American merchantmen already had been captured by fast British cruisers.

The members of the Syndicate well understood that if a war were to be carried on as they desired, they must strike the first real blow. Comparatively speaking, a very short time had elapsed since the declaration of war, and the opportunity to take the initiative was still open.

It was in order to take this initiative that, in the early hours of a July morning, two of the Syndicate's armored vessels, each accompanied by a crab, steamed out of a New England port, and headed for the point on the Canadian coast where it had been decided to open the campaign.

The vessels of the Syndicate had no individual names. The spring-armored ships were termed "repellers," and were numbered, and the crabs were known by the letters of the alphabet. Each repeller was in charge of a Director of Naval Operations, and the whole naval force of the Syndicate was under the command of a Director-in-chief. On this momentous occasion this officer was on board of Repeller No. 1, and commanded the little fleet.

The repellers had never been vessels of great speed, and their present armor of steel strips, the lower portion of which was frequently under water, considerably retarded their progress; but each of them was taken in tow by one of the swift and powerful crabs, and, with this assistance, they made very good time, reaching their destination on the morning of the second day.

It was on a breezy day, with a cloudy sky, and the sea moderately smooth, that the little fleet of the Syndicate lay to off the harbor of one of the principal Canadian seaports. About five miles away, the headlands on either side of the mouth of the harbor could be plainly seen. It had been decided that Repeller No. 1 should begin operations. Accordingly, that vessel steamed about a mile nearer the harbor, accompanied by Crab A. The other repeller and crab remained in their first position, ready to act in case they should be needed.

The approach of two vessels, evidently men-of-war, and carrying the American flag, was perceived from the forts and redoubts at the mouth of the harbor, and the news quickly spread to the city and to the vessels in port. Intense excitement ensued, on land and water, among the citizens of the place, as well as its defenders. Every man who had a post of duty was instantly at it, and in less than half an hour the British man-of-war *Scarabæus*, which had been lying at anchor a short distance outside the harbor, came steaming out to meet the enemy. There were other naval vessels in port, but they required more time to be put in readiness for action.

As soon as the approach of the *Scarabæus* was perceived by Repeller No. 1, a boat bearing a white flag was lowered from that vessel, and was rapidly rowed toward the British ship. When the latter saw the boat coming, she lay to, and awaited its arrival. A note was delivered to the captain of the *Scarabæus*, in which it was stated that the Syndicate which had undertaken,—on the part of the United States, the conduct of the war between that country and Great Britain, was now prepared to demand the surrender of this city, with its forts and defences and all vessels within its harbor, and, as a first step, the immediate surrender of the vessel to the commander of which this note was delivered.

The overwhelming effrontery of this demand caused the commander of the *Scarabæus* to doubt whether he had to deal with a raving lunatic or a blustering fool, but he informed the person in charge of the flag-of-truce boat that he would give him fifteen minutes in which to get back to his vessel, and that he would then open fire upon that craft.

The men who rowed the little boat were not men-of-war's-men, and were unaccustomed to duties of this kind. In eight minutes they had reached their vessel, and were safe on board.

Just seven minutes afterwards the first shot came from the *Scarabæus*. It passed over Repeller No. 1, and that vessel, instead of replying, immediately steamed nearer her adversary. The Director-in-chief desired to determine the effect of an active cannonade upon the new armor, and, therefore, ordered the vessel placed in such a position that the Englishman might have the best opportunity for using it as a target.

The *Scarabæus* lost no time in availing herself of the facilities offered. She was a large and powerful ship, with a heavy armament, and, soon getting the range of the Syndicate's vessel, she hurled ball after ball upon her striped side. Repeller No. 1 made no reply, but quietly submitted to the terrible bombardment. Some of the great shot jarred her from bow to stern, but not one of them broke a steel spring, nor penetrated the heavy inside plates.

After half an hour of this work, the Director-in-chief became satisfied that the new armor had well acquitted itself in the severe trial to which it had been subjected. Some of the air-buffers had been disabled, probably on account of faults in their construction, but these could readily be replaced, and no further injury had been done the vessel. It was not necessary, therefore, to continue the experiment any longer, and, besides, there was danger that the Englishman, perceiving that his antagonist did not appear to be affected by his fire, would approach closer and endeavor to ram her. This was to be avoided, for the *Scarabæus* was a much larger

vessel than Repeller No. 1, and able to run into the latter and sink her by mere preponderance of weight.

It was, therefore, decided now to test the powers of the crabs. Signals were made from Repeller No. 1 to Crab A, which had been lying with the larger vessel between it and the enemy. These signals were made by jets of dense black smoke, which were ejected from a small pipe on the repeller. These slender columns of smoke preserved their cylindrical forms for some moments, and were visible at a great distance, by day or night, being illumined, in the latter case, by electric light. The length and frequency of these jets were regulated by an instrument in the Director's room. Thus, by means of long and short puffs, with the proper use of intervals, a message could be projected into the air, as a telegraphic instrument would mark it upon paper.

In this manner, Crab A was ordered to proceed immediately to the attack of the *Scarabæus*. The almost submerged vessel steamed rapidly from behind her consort, and made for the British man-of-war.

When the latter vessel perceived the approach of this turtle-backed object, squirting little jets of black smoke as she replied to the orders from the repeller, there was great amazement on board. The crab had not been seen before, but, as it came rapidly on, there was no time for curiosity or discussion, and several heavy guns were brought to bear upon it. It was difficult to hit a rapidly moving flat object scarcely above the surface of the water, and although several shot struck the crab, they glanced off without in the least interfering with its progress.

Crab A soon came so near the *Scarabæus* that it was

impossible to depress the guns of the latter so as to strike her. The great vessel was, therefore, headed toward its assailant, and, under a full head of steam, dashed directly at it, to run it down. But the crab could turn as upon a pivot, and, shooting to one side, allowed the surging man-of-war to pass it.

Perceiving instantly that it would be difficult to strike this nimble and almost submerged adversary, the commander of the *Scarabœus* thought it well to let it alone for the present, and to bear down with all speed upon the repeller. But it was easier to hit the crab than to leave it behind. It was capable of great speed, and, following the British vessel, it quickly came up with her.

The course of the *Scarabœus* was instantly changed, and every effort was made to get the vessel into a position to run down the crab. But this was not easy for so large a ship, and Crab A seemed to have no difficulty in keeping close to her stern.

Several machine guns, especially adapted for firing at torpedo boats, or any hostile craft which might be discovered close to a vessel, were now brought to bear upon the crab, and ball after ball was hurled at her. Some of these struck, but glanced off without penetrating her tough armor.

These manœuvres had not continued long, when the crew of the crab was ready to bring into action the peculiar apparatus of that peculiar craft. An enormous pair of iron forceps, each massive limb of which measured twelve feet or more in length, was run out in front of the crab, at a depth of six or eight feet below the surface. These forceps were acted upon by an electric engine of immense power, by which they could

be shut, opened, projected, withdrawn, or turned and twisted.

The crab darted forward, and in the next instant the great teeth of her pincers were fastened with a tremendous grip upon the rudder and rudder-post of the *Scarabæus*.

Then followed a sudden twist, which sent a thrill through both vessels, a crash, a backward jerk, the snapping of a chain, and in a moment the great rudder, with half of the rudder-post attached, was torn from the vessel, and, as the forceps opened, it dropped to leeward, and hung dangling by one chain.

Again the forceps opened wide, again there was a rush, and this time the huge jaws closed upon the rapidly revolving screw-propeller. There was a tremendous crash, and the small but massive crab turned over so far that for an instant one of its sides was plainly visible above the water. The blades of the propeller were crushed and shivered, those parts of the steamer's engines connecting with the propeller-shaft were snapped and rent apart, while the propeller-shaft itself was broken by the violent stoppage.

The crab, which had quickly righted, now backed, still holding the crushed propeller in its iron grasp, and, as it moved away from the *Scarabæus*, it extracted about forty feet of its propeller-shaft; then, opening its massive jaws, it allowed the useless mass of iron to drop to the bottom of the sea.

Every man on board the *Scarabæus* was wild with amazement and excitement. Few could comprehend what had happened, but this very quickly became evident: so far as motive power was concerned, the *Scarabæus* was totally disabled. She could not direct

her course, for her rudder was gone, her propeller was gone, her engines were useless, and she could do no more than float as wind or tide might move her. Moreover, there was a jagged hole in her stern where the shaft had been, and through this the water was pouring into the vessel. As a man-of-war the *Scarabæus* was worthless.

Orders now came fast from Repeller No. 1, which had moved nearer to the scene of conflict. It was to be supposed that the disabled ship was properly furnished with bulkheads, so that the water would penetrate no farther than the stern compartment, and that, therefore, she was in no danger of sinking. Crab A was ordered to make fast to the bow of the *Scarabæus*, and to tow her toward two men-of-war who were rapidly approaching from the harbor.

This proceeding astonished the commander and officers of the *Scarabæus* almost as much as the extraordinary attack which had been made upon their ship. They had expected a demand to surrender and to haul down their flag, but the Director-in-chief, on board Repeller No. 1, was of the opinion that, with her propeller extracted, it mattered little what flag she flew. His work with the *Scarabæus* was over, for it had been ordered by the Syndicate that its vessels should not encumber themselves with prizes.

Towed by the powerful crab, which apparently had no fear that its disabled adversary might fire upon it, the *Scarabæus* moved toward the harbor, and when it had come within a quarter of a mile of the foremost British vessel, Crab A cast off and steamed back to Repeller No. 1.

The other English vessels soon came up, and each

lay to and sent a boat to the *Scarabæus*. After half an hour's consultation, in which the amazement of those on board the damaged vessel was communicated to the officers and crews of her two consorts, it was determined that the smaller of these should tow the disabled ship into port, while the other one, in company with a man-of-war just coming out of the harbor, should make an attack upon Repeller No. 1.

It had been plainly proved that ordinary shot and shell had no effect upon this craft, but it had not been proved that she could withstand the rams of powerful ironclads. If this vessel, that apparently carried no guns, or, at least, had used none, could be crushed, capsized, sunk, or in any way put out of the fight, it was probable that the dangerous submerged nautical machine would not care to remain in these waters. If it remained, it must be destroyed by torpedoes.

Signals were exchanged between the two English vessels, and in a very short time they were steaming toward the repeller. It was a dangerous thing for two vessels of their size to come close enough together for both to ram an enemy at the same time, but it was determined to take the risks and to do this, if possible, for the destruction of the repeller was obviously the first duty in hand.

As the two men-of-war rapidly approached Repeller No. 1, they kept up a steady fire upon her, for if in this way they could damage her, the easier would be their task. With a firm reliance upon the efficacy of the steel-spring armor, the Director-in-chief felt no fear of the enemy's shot and shell, but he was not at all willing that his vessel should be rammed, for the consequences would probably be disastrous. Accord-

ingly, he did not wait for the approach of the two vessels, but, steering seaward, he signalled for the other crab.

When Crab B made its appearance, puffing its little black jets of smoke as it answered the signals of the Director-in-chief, the commanders of the two British vessels were surprised. They had imagined that there was only one of these strange and terrible enemies, and had supposed that she would be afraid to make her peculiar attack upon one of them, because while doing so she would expose herself to the danger of being run down by the other. But the presence of two of these almost submerged engines of destruction entirely changed the situation.

But the commanders of the British ships were brave men. They had started to run down the strangely armored American craft, and run her down they would, if they could. They put on more steam, and went ahead at greater speed. In such a furious onslaught the crabs might not dare to attack them.

But they did not understand the nature nor the powers of these enemies. In less than twenty minutes Crab A had laid hold of one of the men-of-war, and Crab B of the other. The rudders of both were shattered and torn away, and, while the blades of one propeller were crushed to pieces, the other, with nearly half its shaft, was drawn out and dropped into the ocean. Helplessly the two men-of-war rose and fell upon the waves.

In obedience to orders from the repeller, each crab took hold of one of the disabled vessels, and towed it near the mouth of the harbor, where it was left.

The city was now in a state of feverish excitement,

which was intensified by the fact that a majority of the people did not understand what had happened, while those to whom this had been made plain, could not comprehend why such a thing should have been allowed to happen. Three of her Majesty's ships of war, equipped and ready for action, had sailed out of the harbor, and an apparently insignificant enemy, without firing a gun, had put them into such a condition that they were utterly unfit for service, and must be towed into a dry-dock. How could the government, the municipality, the army, or the navy explain this?

The anxiety, the excitement, the nervous desire to know what had happened, and what might be expected next, spread, that evening, to every part of the Dominion reached by telegraph.

The military authorities in charge of the defences of the city were as much disturbed and amazed by what had happened as any civilian could possibly be, but they had no fears for the safety of the place, for the enemy's vessels could not possibly enter, nor even approach, the harbor. The fortifications on the heights mounted guns much heavier than those on the men-of-war, and shots from these, fired from an elevation, might sink even those "under-water devils." But, more than on the forts, they relied upon their admirable system of torpedoes and submarine batteries. With these in position and ready for action, as they now were, it was impossible for an enemy's vessel, floating on the water or under it, to enter the harbor, without certain destruction.

Bulletins to this effect were posted in the city, and somewhat allayed the popular anxiety, although many

people, who were fearful of what might happen next, left by the evening trains for the interior. That night the news of this extraordinary affair was cabled to Europe, and thence back to the United States, and all over the world. In many quarters the account was disbelieved, and in no quarter was it thoroughly understood, for it must be borne in mind that the methods of operation employed by the crabs were not evident to those on board the disabled vessels. But everywhere there was the greatest desire to know what would be done next.

It was the general opinion that the two armored vessels were merely tenders to the submerged machines which had done the mischief. Having fired no guns, nor taken any active part in the combat, there was every reason to believe that they were intended merely as bomb-proof store-ships for their formidable consorts. As these submerged vessels could not attack a town, nor reduce fortifications, but could exercise their power only against vessels afloat, it was plain enough to see that the object of the American Syndicate was to blockade the port. That they would be able to maintain the blockade when the full power of the British navy should be brought to bear upon them was generally doubted, though it was conceded, in the most wrathful circles, that, until the situation should be altered, it would be unwise to risk valuable war-vessels in encounters with the diabolical sea-monsters now lying off the port.

In the New York office of the Syndicate there was great satisfaction. The news received was incorrect and imperfect, but it was evident that, so far, everything had gone well.

About nine o'clock the next morning, Repeller No. 1, with her consort half a mile astern, and preceded by the two crabs, one on either bow, approached to within two miles of the harbor mouth. The crabs, a quarter of a mile ahead of the repeller, moved slowly, for between them they bore an immense net, three or four hundred feet long, and thirty feet deep, composed of jointed steel rods. Along the upper edge of this net was a series of air-floats, which were so graduated that they were sunk by the weight of the net a few feet below the surface of the water, from which position they held the net suspended vertically.

This net, which was intended to protect the repeller against the approach of submarine torpedoes which might be directed from the shore, was anchored at each end, two very small buoys indicating its position. The crabs then falling astern, Repeller No. 1 lay to, with the sunken net between her and the shore, and prepared to project the first Instantaneous Motor bomb ever used in warfare.

The great gun in the bow of the vessel was loaded with one of the largest and most powerful motor bombs, and the spot to be aimed at was selected. This was a point in the water just inside of the mouth of the harbor, and nearly a mile from the land on either side. The distance of this point from the vessel being calculated, the cannon was adjusted at the angle called for by the scale of distances and levels, and the instrument indicating rise, fall, and direction was then put in connection with it.

Now the Director-in-chief stepped forward to the button, by pressing which the power of the motor was developed. The chief of the scientific corps then

showed him the exact point upon the scale which would be indicated when the gun was in its proper position, and the piece was moved upon its bearings so as to approximate, as nearly as possible, this direction.

The bow of the vessel now rose upon the swell of the sea, and the instant that the index upon the scale reached the desired point, the Director-in-chief touched the button.

There was no report, no smoke, no visible sign that the motor had left the cannon, but at that instant there appeared, to those who were on the lookout from a fort about a mile away, a vast aperture in the waters of the bay, which was variously described as from one hundred to five hundred yards in diameter. At that same instant, in the neighboring headlands and islands far up the shores of the bay, and in every street and building of the city, there was felt a sharp shock, as if the underlying rocks had been struck by a gigantic trip-hammer.

At the same instant the sky above the spot where the motor had descended was darkened by a wide-spreading cloud. This was formed of that portion of the water of the bay which had been instantaneously raised to the height of about a thousand feet. The sudden appearance of this cloud was even more terrible than the yawning chasm in the waters of the bay, or the startling shock, but it did not remain long in view. It had no sooner reached its highest elevation than it began to descend. There was a strong sea-breeze blowing, and in its descent this vast mass of water was impelled toward the land.

It came down, not as rain, but as the waters of a

vast cataract—as though a mountain lake, by an earthquake shock, had been precipitated in a body upon a valley. Only one edge of it reached the land, and here the seething flood tore away earth, trees, and rocks, leaving behind it great chasms and gullies, as it descended to the sea.

The bay itself, into which the vast body of the water fell, became a scene of surging madness. The towering walls of water, which had stood up all around the suddenly created aperture, hurled themselves back into the abyss, and down into the great chasm at the bottom of the bay, which had been made when the motor sent its shock along the great rock beds. Down upon, and into, this roaring, boiling tumult fell the tremendous cataract from above, and the harbor became one wild expanse of leaping, maddened waves, hissing their whirling spray high into the air.

During these few terrific moments other things happened, which passed unnoticed in the general consternation. All along the shores of the bay and in front of the city the waters seemed to be sucked away, slowly returning, as the sea forced them to their level, and at many points up and down the harbor there were submarine detonations and upheavals of the water.

These were caused by the explosion, by concussion, of every torpedo and submarine battery in the harbor, and it was with this object in view that the Instantaneous Motor bomb had been shot into the mouth of the bay.

The effects of the discharge of the motor bomb astonished, and even startled, those on board the repellers and the crabs. At the instant of touching the button, a hydraulic shock was felt on Repeller No. 1.

This was supposed to be occasioned by the discharge of the motor, but it was also felt on the other vessels. It was the same shock that had been felt on shore, but less in degree. A few moments after there was a great heaving swell of the sea, which tossed and rolled the four vessels, and lifted the steel protecting-net so high that, for an instant, parts of it showed themselves above the surface like glistening sea-ghosts.

Experiments with motor bombs had been made in unsettled mountainous districts, but this was the first one which had ever exerted its power under water.

On shore, in the forts, and in the city, no one for an instant supposed that the terrific phenomenon which had just occurred was in any way due to the vessels of the Syndicate. The repellers were in plain view, and it was evident that neither of them had fired a gun. Besides, the firing of cannon did not produce such effects. It was the general opinion that there had been an earthquake shock, accompanied by a cloud-burst and extraordinary convulsions of the sea. Such a combination of elementary disturbances had never been known in those parts, and a great many persons were much more frightened than if they had understood what had really happened.

In about half an hour after the discharge of the motor bomb, when the sea had resumed its usual quiet, a boat, carrying a white flag, left Repeller No. 1, rowed directly over the submerged net, and made for the harbor. When the approach of this flag of truce was perceived from the fort nearest the mouth of the harbor, it occasioned much surmise. Had the earthquake brought these Syndicate knaves to their senses? Or were they about to make further absurd and outra-

geous demands? Some irate officers were of the opinion that enemies like these should be considered no better than pirates, and that their flag of truce should be fired upon. But the commandant of the fort paid no attention to such counsels, and sent a detachment with a white flag down to the beach to meet the approaching boat and learn its errand.

The men in the boat had nothing to do but to deliver a letter from the Director-in-chief to the commandant of the fort, and then row back again. No answer was required.

When the commandant read the brief note, he made no remark. In fact, he could think of no appropriate remark to make. The missive simply informed him that at 10 : 18 A. M. of that day the first bomb from the marine forces of the Syndicate had been discharged into the waters of the harbor. At or about 2 P. M. the second bomb would be discharged at Fort Pilcher. That was all.

What this extraordinary message meant could not be imagined by any officer of the garrison. If the people on board the ships were taking advantage of the earthquake, and supposed they could induce British soldiers to believe that it had been caused by one of their bombs, then were they idiots indeed. They would fire their second shot at Fort Pilcher! This was impossible, for they had not yet fired their first shot. These Syndicate people were evidently very tricky, and the defenders of the port must, therefore, be very cautious.

Fort Pilcher was a very large but unfinished fortification, on a bluff on the opposite side of the harbor. Work had been discontinued on it as soon as the Syn-

dicate's vessels had appeared off the port, for it was not desired to expose the builders and other workmen to a possible bombardment. The place was now, therefore, almost deserted. But after the receipt of the Syndicate's message, the commandant feared that the enemy might throw an ordinary shell into the unfinished works, and he sent a boat across the bay to order away any workmen or others who might be lingering about the place.

A little after 2 P. M., an Instantaneous Motor bomb was discharged from Repeller No. 1 into Fort Pilcher. It was set to act five seconds after impact with the object aimed at. It struck in a central portion of the unfinished fort, and having described a high curve in the air, descended not only with its own motive power but with the force of gravitation, and penetrated deep into the earth.

Five seconds later a vast brown cloud appeared on the Fort Pilcher promontory. This cloud was nearly spherical in form, with an apparent diameter of about a thousand yards. At the same instant a shock similar to that accompanying the first motor bomb was felt in the city and surrounding country; but this was not so severe as the other, for the second bomb did not exert its force upon the underlying rocks of the region as the first one had done.

The great brown cloud quickly began to lose its spherical form, part of it descending heavily to the earth, and part floating away in vast dust-clouds, borne inland by the breeze, settling downward as they moved, and depositing on land, water, ships, houses, domes, and trees an almost impalpable powder.

When the cloud had cleared away there were no

fortifications, and the bluff on which they had stood had disappeared. Part of this bluff had floated away on the wind, and part of it lay piled in great heaps of sand on the spot where its rocks had upheld a fort.

The effect of the motor bomb was fully observed with glasses from the various fortifications of the port, and from many points of the city and harbor, and those familiar with the effects of explosives were not long in making up their minds what had happened. They felt sure that a mine had been sprung beneath Fort Pilcher, and they were now equally confident that in the morning a torpedo of novel and terrible power had been exploded in the harbor. They now disbelieved in the earthquake, and treated with contempt the pretence that shots had been fired from the Syndicate's vessel. This was merely a trick of the enemy. It was not even likely that the mine or the torpedo had been operated from the ship. These were, in all probability, under the control of confederates on shore, and had been exploded at times agreed upon beforehand. All this was perfectly plain to the military authorities.

But the people of the city derived no comfort from the announcement of these conclusions. For all that anybody knew, the whole city might be undermined, and at any moment might ascend in a cloud of minute particles. They felt that they were in a region of hidden traitors and bombs, and, in consequence of this belief, thousands of citizens left their homes.

That afternoon a truce-boat again went out from Repeller No. 1, and rowed to the fort, where a letter to the commandant was delivered. This, like the

other, demanded no answer, and the boat returned. Later in the afternoon the two repellers, accompanied by the crabs, and leaving the steel net still anchored in its place, retired a few miles seaward, where they prepared to lay to for the night.

The letter brought by the truce-boat was read by the commandant, surrounded by his officers. It stated that in twenty-four hours from time of writing it, which would be at or about four o'clock on the next afternoon, a bomb would be thrown into the garrisoned fort under the command of the officer addressed. As this would result in the entire destruction of the fortification, the commandant was earnestly counselled to evacuate the fort before the hour specified.

Ordinarily the commandant of the fort was of a calm and unexcitable temperament. During the astounding events of that day and the day before he had kept his head cool. His judgment, if not correct, was the result of sober and earnest consideration. But now he lost his temper. The unparalleled effrontery and impertinence of this demand of the American Syndicate was too much for his self-possession. He stormed in anger.

Here was the culmination of the knavish trickery of these conscienceless pirates who had attacked the port. A torpedo had been exploded in the harbor, an unfinished fort had been mined and blown up, and all this had been done to frighten him—a British soldier, in command of a strong fort, well garrisoned and fully supplied with all the munitions of war. In the fear that his fort would be destroyed by a mystical bomb, he was expected to march to a place of safety, with all his forces. If this should be done it would not be long before these crafty fellows would occupy the fort, and,

with its great guns turned inland, would hold the city at their mercy. There could be no greater insult to a soldier than to suppose he could be gulled by a trick like this.

No thought of actual danger entered the mind of the commandant. It had been easy enough to sink a great torpedo in the harbor, and the unguarded bluffs of Fort Pilcher offered every opportunity to the scoundrels, who may have worked at their mines through the nights of several months. But a mine under the fort which he commanded was an impossibility. Its guarded outposts prevented any such method of attack. At a bomb, or at a dozen or a hundred of the Syndicate's bombs, he snapped his fingers. He could throw bombs as well.

Nothing would please him better than that those ark-like ships in the offing should come near enough for an artillery fight. A few tons of solid shot and shell, dropped on top of them, might be a very conclusive answer to their impudent demands.

The letter from the Syndicate, together with his own convictions on the subject, were communicated by the commandant to the military authorities of the port, and to the War Office of the Dominion. The news of what had happened that day had already been cabled across the Atlantic, back to the United States, and all over the world, and the profound impression created by it was intensified when it became known what the Syndicate proposed to do the next day. Orders and advices from the British Admiralty and War Office sped across the ocean, and that night few of the leaders in government circles in England or Canada closed their eyes.

The opinions of the commandant of the fort were received with but little favor by the military and naval authorities. Great preparations were already ordered to repel and crush this most audacious attack upon the port, but, in the meantime, it was highly desirable that the utmost caution and prudence should be observed. Three men-of-war had already been disabled by the novel and destructive machines of the enemy, and it had been ordered that, for the present, no more vessels of the British Navy be allowed to approach the crabs of the Syndicate.

Whether it was a mine or a bomb which had been used in the destruction of the unfinished works of Fort Pilcher, it would be impossible to determine until an official survey had been made of the ruins, but, in any event, it would be wise and humane not to expose the garrison of the fort on the south side of the harbor to the danger which had overtaken the works on the opposite shore. If, contrary to the opinion of the commandant, the garrisoned fort were really mined, the following day would probably prove the fact. Until this point should be determined, it would be highly judicious to evacuate the fort temporarily. This could not be followed by occupation of the works by the enemy, for all approaches, either by troops in boats or by bodies of confederates by land, could be fully covered by the inland redoubts and fortifications.

When the orders for evacuation reached the commandant of the fort, he protested hotly, and urged that his protest be considered. It was not until the command had been reiterated, both from London and Ottawa, that he accepted the situation, and with bowed head prepared to leave his post. All night prepara-

tions for evacuation went on, and during the next morning the garrison left the fort, and established itself far enough away to preclude danger from the explosion of a mine, but near enough to be available in case of necessity.

During the morning there arrived in the offing another Syndicate vessel. This had started from a northern port of the United States, before the repellers and the crabs, and it had been engaged in laying a private submarine cable, which should put the office of the Syndicate in New York in direct communication with its naval forces engaged with the enemy. Telegraphic connection between the cable-boat and Repeller No. 1 having been established, the Syndicate soon received from its Director-in-chief full and comprehensive accounts of what had been done and what it was proposed to do. Great was the satisfaction among the members of the Syndicate when these direct and official reports came in. Up to this time they had been obliged to depend upon very unsatisfactory intelligence communicated from Europe, which had been supplemented by wild statements and rumors smuggled across the Canadian border.

To counteract the effect of these, a full report was immediately made by the Syndicate to the government of the United States, and a bulletin distinctly describing what had happened was issued to the people of the country. These reports, which received a world-wide circulation in the newspapers, created a popular elation in the United States, and gave rise to serious apprehensions and concern in many other countries. But under both elation and concern there was a certain doubtfulness. So far, the Syndicate had been success-

ful, but its style of warfare was decidedly experimental, and its forces, in numerical strength at least, were weak. What would happen when the great naval power of Great Britain should be brought to bear upon the Syndicate, was a question whose probable answer was likely to cause apprehension and concern in the United States, and elation in many other countries.

The commencement of active hostilities had been precipitated by this Syndicate. In England preparations were making by day and by night to send upon the coast-lines of the United States a fleet which, in numbers and power, would be greater than that of any naval expedition in the history of the world. It is no wonder that many people of sober judgment in America looked upon the affair of the crabs and the repellers as but an incident in the beginning of a great and disastrous war.

On the morning of the destruction of Fort Pilcher, the Syndicate's vessels moved toward the port, and the steel net was taken up by the two crabs, and moved nearer the mouth of the harbor, at a point from which the fort, now in process of evacuation, was in full view. When this had been done, Repeller No. 2 took up her position at a moderate distance behind the net, and the other vessels stationed themselves near by.

The protection of the net was considered necessary, for although there could be no reasonable doubt that all the torpedoes in the harbor and river had been exploded, others might be sent out against the Syndicate's vessels, and a torpedo under a crab or a repeller was the enemy most feared by the Syndicate.

About three o'clock, the signals between the repellers became very frequent, and soon afterwards a truce-boat went out from Repeller No. 1. This was rowed with great rapidity, but it was obliged to go much farther up the harbor than on previous occasions, in order to deliver its message to an officer of the garrison.

This was to the effect that the evacuation of the fort had been observed from the Syndicate's vessels, and although it had been apparently complete, one of the scientific corps, with a powerful glass, had discovered a man in one of the outer redoubts, whose presence there was probably unknown to the officers of the garrison. It was, therefore, earnestly urged that this man be instantly removed, and, in order that this might be done, the discharge of the motor bomb would be postponed half an hour.

The officer received this message, and was disposed to look upon it as a new trick; but as no time was to be lost, he sent a corporal's guard to the fort, and there discovered an Irish sergeant by the name of Kilsey, who had sworn an oath that, if the rest of men in the fort ran away like a lot of addle-pated sheep, he would not run with them: he would stand to his post to the last, and when the couple of ships outside had got through bombarding the stout walls of the fort, the world would see that there was at least one British soldier who was not afraid of a bomb, be it little or big. Therefore, he had managed to elude observation, and to remain behind.

The sergeant was so hot-headed in his determination to stand by the fort, that it required violence to remove him, and it was not until twenty minutes

past four that the Syndicate observers perceived that he had been taken to the hill behind which the garrison was encamped.

As it had been decided that Repeller No. 2 should discharge the next Instantaneous Motor bomb, there was an anxious desire, on the part of the operators on that vessel, that in this, their first experience, they might do their duty as well as their comrades on board the other repeller had done theirs. The most accurate observations, the most careful calculations, were made and remade, the point to be aimed at being about the centre of the fort.

The motor bomb had been in the cannon for nearly an hour, and everything had long been ready, when, at precisely thirty minutes past four o'clock, the signal to discharge came from the Director-in-chief, and in four seconds afterwards the index on the scale indicated that the gun was in the proper position, and the button was touched.

The motor bomb was set to act the instant it should touch any portion of the fort, and the effect was different from that of the other bombs. There was a quick, hard shock, but it was all in the air. Thousands of panes of glass in the city and in houses for miles around were cracked or broken, birds fell dead or stunned upon the ground, and people on elevations at considerable distances felt as if they had received a blow; but there was no trembling of the ground.

As to the fort, it had entirely disappeared, its particles having been instantaneously removed to a great distance in every direction, falling over such a vast expanse of land and water that their descent was unobservable.

In the place where the fortress had stood there was a wide tract of bare earth, which looked as if it had been scraped into a staring dead level of gravel and clay. The Instantaneous Motor bomb had been arranged to act almost horizontally.

Few persons, except those who from a distance had been watching the fort with glasses, understood what had happened, but every one in the city and surrounding country was conscious that something had happened of a most startling kind, and that it was over in the same instant in which they had perceived it. Everywhere there was the noise of falling window-glass. There were those who asserted that for an instant they had heard, in the distance, a grinding crash; and there were others who were quite sure they had noticed what might be called a flash of darkness—as if something had, with almost unappreciable quickness, passed between them and the sun.

When the officers of the garrison mounted the hill before them, and surveyed the place where their fort had been, there was not one of them who had sufficient command of himself to write a report of what had happened. They gazed at the bare, staring flatness of the shorn bluff, and they looked at each other. This was not war. It was something supernatural, awful! They were not frightened. They were oppressed and appalled. But the military discipline of their minds soon exerted its force, and a brief account of the terrific event was transmitted to the authorities, and Sergeant Kilsey was sentenced to a month in the guard-house.

No one approached the vicinity of the bluff where

the fort had stood, for danger might not be over, but every possible point of observation within a safe distance was soon crowded with anxious and terrified observers. A feeling of awe was noticeable everywhere. If people could have had a tangible idea of what had occurred, it would have been different. If the sea had raged, if a vast body of water had been thrown into the air, if a dense cloud had been suddenly ejected from the surface of the earth, they might have formed some opinion about it. But the instantaneous disappearance of a great fortification, with little more appreciable accompaniment than the sudden tap, as of a little hammer, upon thousands of window-panes, was something which their intellects could not grasp. It was not to be expected that the ordinary mind could appreciate the difference between the action of an Instantaneous Motor when embedded in rocks and earth, and its effect, when opposed by nothing but stone walls, upon or near the surface of the earth.

Early the next morning, the little fleet of the Syndicate prepared to carry out its further orders. The waters of the lower bay were now entirely deserted, craft of every description having taken refuge in the upper part of the harbor, near and above the city. Therefore, as soon as it was light enough to make observations, Repeller No. 1 did not hesitate to discharge a motor bomb into the harbor, a mile or more above where the first one had fallen. This was done in order to explode any torpedoes which might have been put into position since the discharge of the first bomb.

There were very few people in the city and suburbs

who were at that hour out of doors where they could see the great cloud of water rise toward the sky, and behold it descend like a mighty cataract upon the harbor and adjacent shores, but the quick, sharp shock which ran under the town made people spring from their beds, and although nothing was then to be seen, nearly everybody felt sure that the Syndicate's forces had begun their day's work by exploding another mine.

A lighthouse, the occupants of which had been ordered to leave when the fort was evacuated, as they might be in danger in case of a bombardment, was so shaken by the explosion of this motor bomb that it fell in ruins on the rocks upon which it had stood.

The two crabs now took the steel net from its moorings and carried it up the harbor. This was rather difficult, on account of the islands, rocks, and sandbars, but the leading crab had on board a pilot acquainted with those waters. With the net hanging between them, the two submerged vessels, one carefully following the other, reached a point about two miles below the city, where the net was anchored across the harbor. It did not reach from shore to shore, but, in the course of the morning, two other nets, designed for shallower waters, were brought from the repellers and anchored at each end of the main net, thus forming a line of complete protection against submarine torpedoes which might be sent down from the upper harbor.

Repeller No. 1 now steamed into the harbor, accompanied by Crab A, and anchored about a quarter of a mile seaward of the net. The other repeller, with her attendant crab, cruised about the mouth of

the harbor, watching a smaller entrance to the port, as well as the larger one, and thus maintaining an effective blockade. This was not a difficult duty, for, since the news of the extraordinary performances of the crabs had been spread abroad, no merchant-vessel, large or small, cared to approach that port, and strict orders had been issued by the British Admiralty that no vessel of the navy should, until further instructed, engage in combat with the peculiar craft of the Syndicate. Until a plan of action had been determined upon, it was very desirable that English cruisers should not be exposed to useless injury and danger.

This being the state of affairs, a message was sent from the office of the Syndicate across the border to the Dominion government, which stated that the seaport city which had been attacked by the forces of the Syndicate now lay under the guns of its vessels, and, in case of any overt act of war by Great Britain or by Canada alone, such as the entrance of an armed force from British territory into the United States, or a capture of, or attack upon, an American vessel, naval or commercial, by a British man-of-war, or an attack upon an American port by British vessels, the city would be bombarded and destroyed.

This message, which was, of course, instantly transmitted to London, placed the British government in the apparent position of being held by the throat by the American War Syndicate. But if the British government, or the people of England or Canada, recognized this position at all, it was merely as a temporary condition. In a short time the most powerful men-of-war of the Royal Navy, as well as a fleet of transports carrying troops, would reach the

coasts of North America, and then the condition of affairs would rapidly be changed. It was absurd to suppose that a few medium-sized vessels, however heavily armored, or a few newfangled submarine machines, however destructive they might be, could withstand an armada of the largest and finest armored vessels in the world. A ship or two might be disabled, although this was unlikely, now that the new method of attack was understood, but it would soon be the ports of the United States, on both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, which would lie under the guns of an enemy.

But it was not in the power of their navy that the British government and the people of England and Canada placed their greatest trust, but in the incapacity of their petty foe to support its ridiculous assumptions. The claim that the city lay under the guns of the American Syndicate was considered ridiculous, for few people believed that these vessels had any guns. Certainly, there had been no evidence that any shots had been fired from them. In the opinion of reasonable people, the destruction of the forts and the explosions in the harbor had been caused by mines—mines of a new and terrifying power—which were the work of traitors and confederates. The destruction of the lighthouse had strengthened this belief, for its fall was similar to that which would have been occasioned by a great explosion under its foundation.

But, however terrifying and appalling had been the results of the explosion of these mines, it was not thought probable that there were any more of them. The explosions had taken place at exposed points

distant from the city, and the most careful investigation failed to discover any present signs of mining operations.

This theory of mines worked by confederates was received throughout the civilized world, and was universally condemned. Even in the United States the feeling was so strong against this apparent alliance between the Syndicate and British traitors, that there was reason to believe that a popular pressure would be brought to bear upon the government sufficient to force it to break its contract with the Syndicate, and to carry on the war with the national army and navy. The crab was considered an admirable addition to the strength of the navy, but a mine under a fort, laid and fired by perfidious confederates, was considered unworthy of an enlightened people.

The members of the Syndicate now found themselves in an embarrassing and dangerous position,—a position in which they were placed by the universal incredulity regarding the Instantaneous Motor,—and, unless they could make the world believe that they really used such a motor bomb, the war could not be prosecuted on the plan projected.

It was easy enough to convince the enemy of the terrible destruction the Syndicate was able to effect, but to make that enemy and the world understand that this was done by bombs, which could be used in one place as well as in another, was difficult indeed. They had attempted to prove this by announcing that at a certain time a bomb should be projected into a certain fort. Precisely at the specified time the fort had been destroyed, but nobody believed that a bomb had been fired.

Every opinion, official or popular, concerning what it had done, and what might be expected of it, was promptly forwarded to the Syndicate by its agents, and it was thus enabled to see very plainly indeed that the effect it had desired to produce had not been produced. Unless the enemy could be made to understand that any fort or ships within ten miles of one of the Syndicate's cannon could be instantaneously dissipated in the shape of fine dust, this war could not be carried on upon the principles adopted, and, therefore, might as well pass out of the hands of the Syndicate.

Day by day, and night by night, the state of affairs was anxiously considered at the office of the Syndicate in New York. A new and important undertaking was determined upon, and on the success of this the hopes of the Syndicate now depended.

During the rapid and vigorous preparations which the Syndicate were now making for their new venture, several events of interest occurred.

Two of the largest Atlantic mail-steamers, carrying infantry and artillery troops, and conveyed by two swift and powerful men-of-war, arrived off the coast of Canada, considerably to the north of the blockaded city. The departure and probable time of arrival of these vessels had been telegraphed to the Syndicate, through one of the Continental cables, and a repeller, with two crabs, had been for some days waiting for them. The English vessels had taken a high northern course, hoping they might enter the Gulf of St. Lawrence without subjecting themselves to injury from the enemy's crabs, it not being considered probable that there were enough of these vessels to patrol

the entire coast. But although the crabs were few in number, the Syndicate was able to place them where they would be of most use, and when the English vessels arrived off the northern entrance to the gulf, they found their enemies there.

However strong might be the incredulity of the enemy regarding the powers of a repeller to bombard a city, the Syndicate felt sure there would be no present invasion of the United States from Canada, but it wished to convince the British government that troops and munitions of war could not be safely transported across the Atlantic. On the other hand, the Syndicate very much objected to undertaking the imprisonment and sustenance of a large body of soldiers. Orders were, therefore, given to the officer in charge of the repeller not to molest the two transports, but to remove the rudders and extract the screws of the two war-vessels, leaving them to be towed into port by the troop-ships.

This duty was performed by the crabs, while the British vessels, both rams, were preparing to make a united and vigorous onset on the repeller, and the two men-of-war were left hopelessly tossing on the waves. One of the transports, a very fast steamer, had already entered the straits, and could not be signalled, but the other one returned and took both the war-ships in tow, proceeding very slowly until, after entering the gulf, she was relieved by tug-boats.

Another event of a somewhat different character was the occasion of much excited feeling and comment, particularly in the United States. The descent and attack by British vessels on an Atlantic port was a matter of popular expectation. The Syndicate had repellers and crabs at the most important points,

but, in the minds of naval officers and a large portion of the people, little dependence for defence was to be placed upon these. As to the ability of the War Syndicate to prevent invasion or attack by means of its threats to bombard the blockaded Canadian port, very few believed in it. Even if the Syndicate could do any more damage in that quarter, which was improbable, what was to prevent the British Navy from playing the same game, and, entering an American seaport, threaten to bombard the place if the Syndicate did not immediately run all their queer vessels high and dry on some convenient beach?

A feeling of indignation against the Syndicate had existed in the navy from the time the war contract had been made, and this feeling increased daily. That the officers and men of the United States Navy should be penned up in harbors, ports, and sounds, while British ships and the hulking mine-springers and rudder-pinchers of the Syndicate were allowed to roam the ocean at will, was a very hard thing for brave sailors to bear. Sometimes the resentment against this state of affairs rose almost to revolt.

The great naval preparations of England were not yet complete, but single British men-of-war were now frequently seen off the Atlantic coast of the United States. No American vessels had been captured by these since the message of the Syndicate to the Dominion of Canada and the British government. But one good reason for this was the fact that it was very difficult now to find upon the Atlantic Ocean a vessel sailing under the American flag. As far as possible, these had taken refuge in their own ports or in those of neutral countries.

At the mouth of Delaware Bay, behind the great

breakwater, was now collected a number of coastwise sailing-vessels and steamers of various classes and sizes, and, for the protection of these maritime refugees, two vessels of the United States Navy were stationed at this point. These were the *Lenox* and *Stockbridge*, two of the finest cruisers in the service, and commanded by two of the most restless and brave officers of the American Navy.

The appearance, early on a summer morning, of a large British cruiser off the mouth of the harbor, filled those two commanders with uncontrollable belligerency. That, in time of war, a vessel of the enemy should be allowed, undisturbed, to sail up and down before an American harbor, while an American vessel, filled with brave American sailors, lay inside like a cowed dog, was a thought which goaded the soul of each of these commanders. There was a certain rivalry between the two ships, and, considering the insult offered by the flaunting red cross in the offing, and the humiliating restrictions imposed by the Navy Department, each commander thought only of his own ship, and not at all of the other.

It was almost at the same time that the commanders of the two ships separately came to the conclusion that the proper way to protect the fleet behind the breakwater was for his vessel to steam boldly out to sea and attack the British cruiser. If this vessel carried a long-range gun, what was to hinder her from suddenly running in closer and sending a few shells into the midst of the defenceless merchantmen? In fact, to go out and fight her was the only way to protect the lives and property in the harbor.

It was true that one of those beastly repellers was

sneaking about off the cape, accompanied, probably, by an underwater tongs-boat. But as neither of these had done anything, or seemed likely to do anything, the British cruiser should be attacked without loss of time.

When the commander of the *Lenox* came to this decision, his ship was well abreast of Cape Henlopen, and he, therefore, proceeded directly out to sea. There was a little fear in his mind that the English cruiser, which was now bearing to the southeast, might sail off and get away from him. The *Stockbridge* was detained by the arrival of a despatch-boat from the shore with a message from the Navy Department. But as this message related only to the measurements of a certain deck-gun, her commander intended, as soon as an answer could be sent off, to sail out and give battle to the British vessel.

Every soul on board the *Lenox* was now filled with fiery ardor. The ship was already in good fighting trim, but every possible preparation was made for a contest which should show their country and the world what American sailors were made of.

The *Lenox* had not proceeded more than a mile out to sea, when she perceived Repeller No. 6 coming toward her from seaward, and in a direction which indicated that it intended to run across her course. The *Lenox*, however, went straight on, and in a short time the two vessels were quite near each other. Upon the deck of the repeller now appeared the director in charge, who, with a speaking-trumpet, hailed the *Lenox*, and requested her to lay to, as he had something to communicate. The commander of the *Lenox*, through his trumpet, answered that he

wanted no communications, and advised the other vessel to keep out of his way.

The *Lenox* now put on a greater head of steam, and as she was, in any case, a much faster vessel than the repeller, she rapidly increased the distance between herself and the Syndicate's vessel, so that in a few moments hailing was impossible. Quick signals now shot up in jets of black smoke from the repeller, and in a very short time afterwards the speed of the *Lenox* slackened so much that the repeller was able to come up with her.

When the two vessels were abreast of each other, and at a safe hailing distance apart, another signal went up from the repeller, and then both vessels almost ceased to move through the water, although the engines of the *Lenox* were working at high speed, with her propeller-blades stirring up a whirlpool at her stern.

For a minute or two the officers of the *Lenox* could not comprehend what had happened. It was first supposed that by mistake the engines had been slackened, but, almost at the same moment that it was found this was not the case, the discovery was made that the crab accompanying the repeller had laid hold of the stern-post of the *Lenox*, and, with all the strength of her powerful engines, was holding her back.

Now burst forth in the *Lenox* a storm of frenzied rage, such as was never seen, perhaps, upon any vessel, since vessels were first built. From the commander to the stokers, every heart was filled with fury at the insult which was put upon them. The commander roared through his trumpet that if that infernal sea-beetle were not immediately loosed from his ship, he would first sink her and then the repeller.

To these remarks the director of the Syndicate's vessels paid no attention, but proceeded to state, as briefly and forcibly as possible, that the *Lenox* had been detained in order that he might have an opportunity of speaking with her commander, and of informing him that his action in coming out of the harbor for the purpose of attacking a British vessel was in direct violation of the contract between the United States and the Syndicate having charge of the war, and that such action could not be allowed.

The commander of the *Lenox* paid no more attention to these words than the Syndicate's director had given to those he had spoken, but immediately commenced a violent attack upon the crab. It was impossible to bring any of the large guns to bear upon her, for she was almost under the stern of the *Lenox*, but every means of offence which infuriated ingenuity could suggest was used against it. Machine-guns were trained to fire almost perpendicularly, and shot after shot was poured upon that portion of its glistening back which appeared above the water.

But, as these projectiles seemed to have no effect upon the solid back of Crab H, two great anvils were hoisted at the end of the spanker-boom, and dropped, one after the other, upon it. The shocks were tremendous, but the internal construction of the crabs provided, by means of upright beams, against injury from attacks of this kind, and the great masses of iron slid off into the sea without doing any damage.

Finding it impossible to make any impression upon the mailed monster at his stern, the commander of the *Lenox* hailed the director of the repeller, and swore to him, through his trumpet, that if he did not imme-

diately order the *Lenox* to be set free, her heaviest guns should be brought to bear upon his floating counting-house, and that it should be sunk, if it took all day to do it.

It would have been a grim satisfaction to the commander of the *Lenox* to sink Repeller No. 6, for he had known the vessel when she had belonged to the United States Navy. Before she had been bought by the Syndicate, and fitted out with spring armor, he had made two long cruises in her, and he bitterly hated her, from her keel up.

The director of the repeller agreed to release the *Lenox* the instant her commander would consent to return to port. No answer was made to this proposition, but a dynamite-gun on the *Lenox* was brought to bear upon the Syndicate's vessel. Desiring to avoid any complications which might ensue from actions of this sort, the repeller steamed ahead, while the director signalled Crab H to move the stern of the *Lenox* to the windward, which being quickly done, the gun of the latter bore upon the distant coast.

It was now very plain to the Syndicate director that his words had no effect upon the commander of the *Lenox*, and he, therefore, signalled Crab H to tow the United States vessel into port. When the commander of the *Lenox* saw that his vessel was beginning to move backward, he gave instant orders to put on all steam. But this was found to be useless, for, when the dynamite-gun was about to be fired, the engines had been ordered stopped, and the moment that the propeller-blades ceased moving, the nippers of the crab had been released from their hold upon

the stern-post, and the propeller-blades of the *Lenox* were gently but firmly seized in a grasp which included the rudder. It was, therefore, impossible for the engines of the vessel to revolve the propeller, and, unresistingly, the *Lenox* was towed, stern foremost, to the breakwater.

The news of this incident created the wildest indignation in the United States Navy, and throughout the country the condemnation of what was considered the insulting action of the Syndicate was general. In foreign countries the affair was the subject of a good deal of comment, but it was also the occasion of much serious consideration, for it proved that one of the Syndicate's submerged vessels could, without firing a gun, and without fear of injury to itself, capture a man-of-war and tow it whither it pleased.

The authorities at Washington took instant action on the affair, and, as it was quite evident that the contract between the United States and the Syndicate had been violated by the *Lenox*, the commander of that vessel was reprimanded by the Secretary of the Navy, and enjoined that there should be no repetitions of his offence. But, as the commander of the *Lenox* knew that the Secretary of the Navy was as angry as he was at what had happened, he did not feel his reprimand to be in any way a disgrace.

It may be stated that the *Stockbridge*, which had steamed for the open sea as soon as the business which had detained her was completed, did not go outside the cape. When her officers perceived, with their glasses, that the *Lenox* was returning to port, stern foremost, they opined what had happened, and, desiring that their ship should do all her sailing in the

natural way, the *Stockbridge* was put about, and steamed, bow foremost, to her anchorage behind the breakwater, the commander thanking his stars that, for once, the *Lenox* had got ahead of him.

The members of the Syndicate were very anxious to remove the unfavorable impression regarding what was called, in many quarters, their attack upon a United States vessel, and a circular to the public was issued, in which they expressed their deep regret at being obliged to interfere with so many brave officers and men in a moment of patriotic enthusiasm, and explaining how absolutely necessary it was that the *Lenox* should be removed from a position where a conflict with English line-of-battle ships would be probable. There were many thinking persons who saw the weight of the Syndicate's statements, but the effect of the circular upon the popular mind was not great.

The Syndicate was now hard at work, making preparations for the grand stroke which had been determined upon. In the whole country there was scarcely a man whose ability could be made available in their work, who was not engaged in their service, and everywhere, in foundries, workshops, and shipyards, the construction of their engines of war was being carried on, by day and by night. No contracts were made for the delivery of work at certain times; everything was done under the direct supervision of the Syndicate and its subordinates, and the work went on with a definiteness and rapidity hitherto unknown in naval construction.

In the midst of the Syndicate's labors, there arrived off the coast of Canada the first result of Great Brit-

ain's preparations for her war with the American Syndicate, in the shape of the *Adamant*, the largest and finest ironclad which had ever crossed the Atlantic, and which had been sent to raise the blockade of the Canadian port by the Syndicate's vessels.

This great ship had been especially fitted out to engage in combat with repellers and crabs. As far as was possible, the peculiar construction of the Syndicate's vessels had been carefully studied, and English specialists in the line of naval construction and ordnance had given most earnest consideration to methods of attack and defence most likely to succeed with these novel ships of war. The *Adamant* was the only vessel which it had been possible to send out in so short a time, and her cruise was somewhat of an experiment. If she should be successful in raising the blockade of the Canadian port, the British Admiralty would have but little difficulty in dealing with the American Syndicate.

The most important object was to provide a defence against the screw-extracting and rudder-breaking crabs, and, to this end, the *Adamant* had been fitted with what was termed a "stern-jacket." This was a great cage of heavy steel bars, which was attached to the stern of the vessel in such a way that it could be raised high above the water, so as to offer no impediment, while under way, but which, in time of action, could be let down so as to surround and protect the rudder and screw-propellers, of which the *Adamant* had two.

This was considered an adequate defence against the nippers of a Syndicate crab, but as a means of offence against these almost submerged vessels a novel

contrivance had been adopted. From a great boom projecting over the stern, a large ship's cannon was suspended perpendicularly, muzzle downward. This gun could be swung around to the deck, hoisted into a horizontal position, and loaded with a heavy charge, a wooden plug keeping the load in position when the gun hung perpendicularly.

If the crab should come under the stern, this cannon could be fired directly downward upon her back, and it was not believed that any vessel of the kind could stand many such tremendous shocks. It was not known exactly how ventilation was supplied to the submarine vessels of the Syndicate, nor how the occupants were enabled to make the necessary observations during action. When under way, the crabs sailed somewhat elevated above the water, but when engaged with an enemy only a small portion of their covering armor could be seen.

It was surmised that under and between some of the scales of this armor there was some arrangement of thick glasses, through which the necessary observation could be made, and it was believed that, even if the heavy perpendicular shots did not crush in the roof of a crab, these glasses would be shattered by concussion. Although this might appear a matter of slight importance, it was thought among naval officers it would necessitate the withdrawal of a crab from action.

In consequence of the idea that the crabs were vulnerable between their overlapping plates, some of the *Adamant's* boats were fitted out with Gatling and machine guns, by which a shower of balls might be sent under the scales, through the glasses, and into

the body of the crab. In addition to their guns, these boats would be supplied with other means of attack upon the crab.

Of course, it would be impossible to destroy these submerged enemies by means of dynamite or torpedoes, for, with two vessels in close proximity, the explosion of a torpedo would be as dangerous to the hull of one as to the other. The British Admiralty would not allow even the *Adamant* to explode torpedoes or dynamite under her own stern.

With regard to a repeller, or spring-armored vessel, the *Adamant* would rely upon her exceptionally powerful armament, and upon her great weight and speed. She was fitted with twin screws and engines of the highest power, and it was believed that she would be able to overhaul, ram, and crush the largest vessel, armored or unarmored, which the Syndicate would be able to bring against her. Some of her guns were of immense caliber, firing shot weighing nearly two thousand pounds, and requiring half a ton of powder for each charge. Besides these, she carried an unusual number of large cannon and two dynamite-guns. She was so heavily plated and armored as to be proof against any known artillery in the world.

She was a floating fortress, with men enough to make up the population of a town, and with stores, ammunition, and coal sufficient to last for a long term of active service. Such was the mighty English battle-ship which had come forward to raise the siege of the Canadian port.

The officers of the Syndicate were well aware of the character of the *Adamant*, her armament and her

defences, and had been informed by cable of her time of sailing and probable destination. They sent out Repeller No. 7, with Crabs J and K, to meet her off the banks of Newfoundland.

This repeller was the largest and strongest vessel that the Syndicate had ready for service. In addition to the spring armor with which these vessels were supplied, this one was furnished with a second coat of armor outside the first, the elastic steel ribs of which ran longitudinally and at right angles to those of the inner set. Both coats were furnished with a great number of improved air-buffers, and the arrangement of spring armor extended five or six feet beyond the massive steel plates with which the vessel was originally armored. She carried one motor cannon of large size.

One of the crabs was of the ordinary pattern, but Crab K was furnished with a spring armor above the heavy plates of her roof. This had been placed upon her after the news had been received by the Syndicate that the *Adamant* would carry a perpendicular cannon over her stern, but there had not been time enough to fit out another crab in the same way.

When the director in charge of Repeller No. 7 first caught sight of the *Adamant*, and scanned through his glass the vast proportions of the mighty ship which was rapidly steaming toward the coast, he felt that a responsibility rested upon him heavier than any which had yet been borne by an officer of the Syndicate; but he did not hesitate in the duty which he had been sent to perform, and immediately ordered the two crabs to advance to meet the *Adamant*, and to proceed to action according to the instructions which

they had previously received. His own ship was kept, in pursuance of orders, several miles distant from the British ship.

As soon as the repeller had been sighted from the *Adamant*, a strict lookout had been kept for the approach of crabs, and when the small exposed portions of the backs of two of these were perceived, glistening in the sunlight, the speed of the great ship slackened. The ability of the Syndicate's submerged vessels to move suddenly and quickly in any direction had been clearly demonstrated, and although a great ironclad with a ram could run down and sink a crab without feeling the concussion, it was known that it would be perfectly easy for the smaller craft to keep out of the way of its bulky antagonist. Therefore, the *Adamant* did not try to ram the crabs, nor to get away from them. Her commander intended, if possible, to run down one or both of them, but he did not propose to do this in the usual way.

As the crabs approached, the stern-jacket of the *Adamant* was let down, and the engines were slowed. This stern-jacket, when protecting the rudder and propellers, looked very much like the cow-catcher of a locomotive, and was capable of being put to a somewhat similar use. It was the intention of the captain of the *Adamant*, should the crabs attempt to attach themselves to his stern, suddenly to put on all steam, reverse his engines, and back upon them, the stern-jacket answering as a ram.

The commander of the *Adamant* had no doubt that in this way he could run into a crab, roll it over in the water, and when it was lying bottom upward, like a floating cask, he could move his ship to a distance,

and make a target of it. So desirous was this brave and somewhat facetious captain to try his new plan upon a crab, that he forebore to fire upon the two vessels of that class which were approaching him. Some of his guns were so mounted that their muzzles could be greatly depressed, and aimed at an object in the water not far from the ship. But these were not discharged, and, indeed, the crabs, which were new ones of unusual swiftness, were alongside the *Adamant* in an incredibly short time, and out of the range of these guns.

Crab J was on the starboard side of the *Adamant*, Crab K was on the port side, and, simultaneously, the two laid hold of her. But they were not directly astern of the great vessel. Each had its nippers fastened to one side of the stern-jacket, near the hinge-like bolts which held it to the vessel, and on which it was raised and lowered.

In a moment the *Adamant* began to steam backward. But the only effect of this motion, which soon became rapid, was to swing the crabs around against her sides, and carry them with her. As the vessels were thus moving, the great pincers of the crabs were twisted with tremendous force, the stern-jacket on one side was broken from its bolt, and on the other the bolt itself was drawn out of the side of the vessel. The nippers then opened, and the stern-jacket fell from their grasp into the sea, snapping, in its fall, the chain by which it had been raised and lowered.

This disaster occurred so quickly that few persons on board the *Adamant* knew what had happened. But the captain, who had seen everything, gave instant orders to go ahead at full speed. The first

thing to be done was to get at a distance from those crabs, keep well away from them, and pound them to pieces with his heavy guns.

But the iron screw-propellers had scarcely begun to move in the opposite direction, before the two crabs, each now lying at right angles with the length of the ship, but neither of them directly astern of her, made a dash with open nippers, and Crab J fastened upon one propeller, while Crab K laid hold of the other. There was a din and crash of breaking metal, two shocks which were felt throughout the vessel, and the shattered and crushed blades of the propellers of the great battle-ship were powerless to move her.

The captain of the *Adamant*, pallid with fury, stood upon the poop. In a moment the crabs would be at his rudder! The great gun, double-shotted and ready to fire, was hanging from its boom over the stern. Crab K, whose roof had the additional protection of spring armor, now moved round so as to be directly astern of the *Adamant*. Before she could reach the rudder, her forward part came under the suspended cannon, and two massive steel shot were driven down upon her with a force sufficient to send them through masses of solid rock. But from the surface of elastic steel springs and air-buffers they rebounded upward, one of them almost falling on the deck of the *Adamant*.

The gunners of this piece had been well trained. In a moment the boom was swung around, the cannon reloaded, and when Crab K fixed her nippers on the rudder of the *Adamant*, two more shot came down upon her. As in the first instance, she dipped and rolled, but the ribs of her uninjured armor had

scarcely sprung back into their places, before her nippers turned, and the rudder of the *Adamant* was broken in two, and the upper portion dragged from its fastenings; then a quick backward jerk snapped its chains, and it was dropped into the sea.

A signal was now sent from Crab J to Repeller No. 7, to the effect that the *Adamant* had been rendered incapable of steaming or sailing, and that she lay subject to order.

Subject to order or not, the *Adamant* did not lie passive. Every gun on board, which could be sufficiently depressed, was made ready to fire upon the crabs, should they attempt to get away. Four large boats, furnished with machine-guns, grapnels, and with various appliances which might be brought into use on a steel-plated roof, were lowered from their davits, and immediately began firing upon the exposed portions of the crabs. Their machine-guns were loaded with small shells, and if these penetrated under the horizontal plates of a crab, and through the heavy glass which was supposed to be in these interstices, the crew of the submerged craft soon would be soon destroyed.

The quick eye of the captain of the *Adamant* had observed, through his glass, while the crabs were still at a considerable distance, their protruding air-pipes, and he had instructed the officers in charge of the boats to make an especial attack upon these. If the air-pipes of a crab could be rendered useless, the crew must inevitably be smothered.

But the brave captain did not know that the condensed-air chambers of the crabs would supply their inmates for an hour or more without recourse to the

outer air, and that the air-pipes, furnished with valves at the top, were always withdrawn under water during action with an enemy. Nor did he know that the glass blocks under the armor-plates of the crabs, which were placed in rubber frames to protect them from concussion above, were also guarded, by steel netting, from injury by small balls.

Valiantly the boats beset the crabs, keeping up a constant fusillade, and endeavoring to throw grapnels over them. If one of these should catch under an overlapping armor-plate, it could be connected with the steam-windlass of the *Adamant*, and a plate might be ripped off, or a crab overturned.

But the crabs proved to be much more lively fish than their enemies had supposed. Turning, as if on a pivot, and darting from side to side, they seemed to be playing with the boats, and not trying to get away from them. The spring armor of Crab K interfered somewhat with its movements, and also put it in danger from attacks by grapnels, and it, therefore, left most of the work to its consort.

Crab J, after darting swiftly in and out among her antagonists for some time, suddenly made a turn, and dashing at one of the boats, ran under it, and raising it on its glistening back, rolled it, bottom upward, into the sea. In a moment the crew of the boat were swimming for their lives. They were quickly picked up by two of the other boats, which then deemed it prudent to return to the ship.

But the second officer of the *Adamant*, who commanded the fourth boat, did not give up the fight.

Having noted the spring armor of Crab K, he believed that, if he could get a grapnel between its steel

ribs, he yet might capture the sea-monster. For some minutes Crab K contented itself with eluding him, but, tired of this, it turned and, raising its huge nippers almost out of the water, seized the bow of the boat, and gave it a gentle crunch, after which it released its hold and retired. The boat, leaking rapidly through two ragged holes, was rowed back to the ship, which it reached half full of water.

The great battle-ship, totally bereft of the power of moving herself, was now rolling in the trough of the sea, and a signal came from the repeller for Crab K to make fast to her and put her head to the wind. This was quickly done, the crab attaching itself to the stern-post of the *Adamant* by a pair of towing-nippers. These were projected from the stern of the crab, and were so constructed that the larger vessel did not communicate all its motion to the smaller one, and could not run down upon it.

As soon as the *Adamant* was brought up with her head to the wind, she opened fire upon the repeller. The latter vessel could easily have sailed out of the range of a motionless enemy, but her orders forbade this. Her director had been instructed by the Syndicate to expose his vessel to the fire of the *Adamant's* heavy guns. Accordingly, the repeller steamed nearer, and turned her broadside toward the British ship.

Scarcely had this been done, when the two great bow guns of the *Adamant* shook the air with tremendous roars, each hurling over the sea nearly a ton of steel. One of these great shot passed over the repeller, but the other struck her armored side fairly amidship. There was a crash and scream of creaking

steel, and Repeller No. 7 rolled over to windward as if she had been struck by a heavy sea. In a moment she righted and shot ahead, and, turning, presented her port side to the enemy. Instant examination of the armor on her other side showed that the two banks of springs were uninjured, and that not an air-buffer had exploded or failed to spring back to its normal length.

Firing from the *Adamant* now came thick and fast, the crab, in obedience to signals, turning her about so as to admit the firing of some heavy guns mounted amidships. Three enormous solid shot struck the repeller at different points on her starboard armor without inflicting damage, while the explosion of several shells which hit her had no more effect upon her elastic armor than the impact of the solid shot.

It was the desire of the Syndicate not only to demonstrate to its own satisfaction the efficiency of its spring armor, but to convince Great Britain that her heaviest guns on her mightiest battle-ships could have no effect upon its armored vessels. To prove the absolute superiority of their means of offence and defence was the supreme object of the Syndicate. For this its members studied and worked by day and by night; for this they poured out their millions; for this they waged war. To prove what they claimed would be victory.

When Repeller No. 7 had sustained the heavy fire of the *Adamant* for about half an hour, it was considered that the strength of her armor had been sufficiently demonstrated, and, with a much lighter heart than when he had turned her broadside to the *Adamant*, her director gave orders that she should steam

out of the range of the guns of the British ship. During the cannonade, Crab J had quietly slipped away from the vicinity of the *Adamant*, and now joined the repeller.

The great ironclad battle-ship, with her lofty sides plated with nearly two feet of solid steel, with her six great guns, each weighing more than a hundred tons, with her armament of other guns, machine-cannon, and almost every appliance of naval warfare, with a small army of officers and men on board, was left in charge of Crab K, of which only a few square yards of armored roof could be seen above the water. This little vessel now proceeded to tow southward her vast prize, uninjured, except that her rudder and propeller-blades were broken and useless.

Although the engines of the crab were of enormous power, the progress made was slow, for the *Adamant* was being towed stern foremost. It would have been easier to tow the great vessel had the crab been attached to her bow, but a ram which extended many feet under water rendered it dangerous for a submerged vessel to attach itself in its vicinity.

During the night the repeller kept company, although at a considerable distance, with the captured vessel, and early the next morning her director prepared to send to the *Adamant* a boat with a flag of truce, and a letter demanding the surrender and subsequent evacuation of the British ship. It was supposed that now, when the officers of the *Adamant* had had time to appreciate the fact that they had no control over the movements of their vessel, that their armament was powerless against their enemies, and that the *Adamant* could be towed wherever the

Syndicate chose to order, or left helpless in mid-ocean, they would be obliged to admit that there was nothing for them to do but to surrender.

But events proved that no such ideas had entered the minds of the *Adamant's* officers, and their action totally prevented sending a flag-of-truce boat. As soon as it was light enough to see the repeller, the *Adamant* began firing great guns at her. She was too far away for the shot to strike her, but to launch and send a boat of any kind into a storm of shot and shell was, of course, impossible.

The cannon suspended over the stern of the *Adamant* was also again brought into play, and shot after shot was driven down upon the towing crab. Every ball rebounded from the spring armor, but the officer in charge of the crab became convinced that after a time this constant pounding, almost in the same place, would injure his vessel, and he signalled the repeller to that effect.

The director of Repeller No. 7 had been considering the situation. There was only one gun on the *Adamant* which could be brought to bear upon Crab K, and it would be the part of wisdom to interfere with the persistent use of this gun. Accordingly, the bow of the repeller was brought to bear upon the *Adamant*, and her motor gun was aimed at the boom from which the cannon was suspended.

The projectile with which the cannon was loaded was not an Instantaneous Motor bomb. It was simply a heavy solid shot, driven by an Instantaneous Motor attachment, and was thus impelled by the same power and in the same manner as the motor bombs. The Instantaneous Motor power had not yet been

used at so great a distance as that between the repeller and the *Adamant*, and the occasion was one of intense interest to the small body of scientific men having charge of the aiming and firing.

The calculations of the distance, of the necessary elevation and direction, and of the degree of motor power required, were made with careful exactness, and when the proper instant arrived the button was touched, and the shot with which the cannon was charged was instantaneously removed to a point in the ocean about a mile beyond the *Adamant*, accompanied by a large portion of the heavy boom at which the gun had been aimed.

The cannon which had been suspended from the end of this boom fell into the sea, and would have crashed down upon the roof of Crab K, had not that vessel, in obedience to a signal from the repeller, loosened its hold upon the *Adamant* and retired a short distance astern. Material injury might not have resulted from the fall of this great mass of metal upon the crab, but it was considered prudent not to take useless risks.

The officers of the *Adamant* were greatly surprised and chagrined by the fall of their gun, with which they had expected ultimately to pound in the roof of the crab. No damage had been done to the vessel, except the removal of a portion of the boom, with some of the chains and blocks attached, and no one on board the British ship imagined for a moment that this injury had been occasioned by the distant repeller. It was supposed that the constant firing of the cannon had cracked the boom, and that it had suddenly snapped.

Even if there had been on board the *Adamant* the means for rigging up another arrangement of the kind for perpendicular artillery practice, it would have required a long time to get it into working order, and the director of Repeller No. 7 hoped that now the British captain would see the uselessness of continued resistance.

But the British captain saw nothing of the kind, and shot after shot from his guns were hurled high into the air, in hopes that the great curves described would bring some of them down on the deck of the repeller. If this beastly store-ship, which could stand fire but never returned it, could be sunk, the *Adamant's* captain would be happy. With the exception of the loss of her motive power, his vessel was intact, and if the stupid crab would only continue to keep the *Adamant's* head to the sea until the noise of her cannonade should attract some other British vessel to the scene, the condition of affairs might be altered.

All that day the great guns of the *Adamant* continued to roar. The next morning, however, the firing was not resumed, and the officers of the repeller were greatly surprised to see approaching from the British ship a boat carrying a white flag. This was a very welcome sight, and the arrival of the boat was awaited with eager interest.

During the night a council had been held on board the *Adamant.* Her cannonading had had no effect, either in bringing assistance or in injuring the enemy; she was being towed steadily southward farther and farther from the probable neighborhood of a British man-of-war, and it was agreed that it would be the part of wisdom to come to terms with the Syndicate's vessel.

Therefore, the captain of the *Adamant* sent a letter to the repeller, in which he stated to the persons in charge of that ship that, although his vessel had been injured in a manner totally at variance with the rules of naval warfare, he would overlook this fact, and would agree to cease firing upon the Syndicate's vessels, provided that the submerged craft which was now made fast to his vessel should attach itself to the *Adamant's* bow, and, by means of a suitable cable, which she would furnish, would tow her into British waters. If this were done, he would guarantee that the towing craft should have six hours in which to get away.

When this letter was read on board the repeller, it created considerable merriment, and an answer was sent back that no conditions but those of absolute surrender could be received from the British ship.

In three minutes after this answer had been received by the captain of the *Adamant*, two shells went whirring and shrieking through the air toward Repeller No. 7, and after that the cannonading from the bow, the stern, the starboard, and the port guns of the great battle-ship went on whenever there was a visible object on the ocean which looked in the least like an American coasting-vessel or man-of-war.

For a week Crab K towed steadily to the south this blazing and thundering marine citadel, and then the crab signalled to the still accompanying repeller that it must be relieved. It had not been fitted out for so long a cruise, and supplies were getting low.

The Syndicate, which had been kept informed of all the details of this affair, had already perceived the necessity of relieving Crab K, and another crab,

well provisioned and fitted out, was already on the way to take its place. This was Crab C, possessing powerful engines, but in point of roof armor the weakest of its class. It could be better spared than any other crab to tow the *Adamant*, and as the British ship had not, and probably could not, put out another suspended cannon, it was considered quite suitable for the service required.

But when Crab C came within half a mile of the *Adamant*, it stopped. It was evident that on board the British ship a steady lookout had been maintained for the approach of fresh crabs, for several enormous shell and shot from heavy guns, which had been trained upward at a high angle, now fell into the sea a short distance from the crab.

Crab C would not have feared these heavy shot, had they been fired from an ordinary elevation; and although no other vessel in the Syndicate's service would have hesitated to run the terrible gantlet, this one, by reason of errors in construction, being less able than any other crab to resist the fall from a great height of ponderous shot and shell, thought it prudent not to venture into this rain of iron, and, moving rapidly beyond the line of danger, it attempted to approach the *Adamant* from another quarter. If it could get within the circle of falling shot, it would be safe. But this it could not do. On all sides of the *Adamant*, guns had been trained to drop shot and shell at a distance of half a mile from the ship.

Around and around the mighty ironclad steamed Crab C. But, wherever she went, her presence was betrayed to the fine glasses on board the *Adamant* by the bit of her shining back and the ripple about it,

and ever between her and the ship came down that hail of iron in masses of a quarter-ton, half-ton, or nearly a whole ton. Crab C could not venture under these, and all day she accompanied the *Adamant* on her voyage south, dashing to this side and that, and looking for the chance that did not come, for all day the cannon of the battle-ship roared at her, wherever she might be.

The inmates of Crab K were now very restive and uneasy, for they were on short rations, both of food and water. They would have been glad enough to cast loose from the *Adamant*, and leave the spiteful ship to roll to her heart's content, broadside to the sea. They did not fear to run their vessel, with its thick roof-plates protected by spring armor, through the heaviest cannonade.

But signals from the repeller commanded them to stay by the *Adamant* as long as they could hold out, and they were obliged to content themselves with a hope that, when night fell, the other crab would be able to get in under the stern of the *Adamant*, and make the desired exchange.

But, to the great discomfiture of the Syndicate's forces, darkness had scarcely come on before four enormous electric lights blazed high up on the single lofty mast of the *Adamant*, lighting up the ocean for a mile on every side of the ship. It was of no more use for Crab C to try to get in now than in broad daylight, and all night the great guns roared, and the little crab manœuvred.

The next morning a heavy fog fell upon the sea, and the battle-ship and Crab C were completely shut out of sight of each other. Now the cannon of the

Adamant were silent, for the only result of firing would be to indicate to the crab the location of the British ship. The smoke-signals of the towing crab could not be seen through the fog by her consorts, and she seemed to be incapable of making signals by sound. Therefore, the commander of the *Adamant* thought it likely that, until the fog rose, the crab could not find his ship.

What that other crab intended to do could be, of course, only a surmise on board the *Adamant*, but it was believed that she would bring with her a torpedo, to be exploded under the British ship. That one crab should tow her away from possible aid until another should bring a torpedo to fasten to her stern-post seemed a reasonable explanation of the action of the Syndicate's vessels.

The officers of the *Adamant* little understood the resources and intentions of their opponents. Every vessel of the Syndicate carried a magnetic indicator, which was designed to prevent collisions with iron vessels. This little instrument was placed at night and during fogs at the bow of the vessel, and a delicate arm of steel, which ordinarily pointed upward at a considerable angle, fell into a horizontal position when any large body of iron approached within a quarter of a mile, and, in falling, rang a small bell. Its point then turned toward the mass of iron.

Soon after the fog came on, one of these indicators, properly protected from the attraction of the metal about it, was put into position on Crab C. Before very long it indicated the proximity of the *Adamant*, and, guided by its steel point, the crab moved quietly to the ironclad, attached itself to its stern-post, and

allowed the happy crew of Crab K to depart coastward.

When the fog rose, the glasses of the *Adamant* showed the approach of no crab, but it was observed, in looking over the stern, that the beggarly devil-fish which had the ship in tow appeared to have made some change in its back.

In the afternoon of that day a truce-boat was sent from the repeller to the *Adamant.* It was allowed to come alongside, but when the British captain found that the Syndicate merely renewed its demand for his surrender, he waxed fiercely angry, and sent the boat back with the word that no further message need be sent to him, unless it should be one complying with the conditions he had offered.

The Syndicate now gave up the task of inducing the captain of the *Adamant* to surrender. Crab C was commanded to continue towing the great ship southward, and to keep her well away from the coast, in order to avoid danger to seaport towns and coasting vessels, while the repeller steamed away.

Week after week the *Adamant* moved southward, roaring away with her great guns whenever an American sail came within possible range, and surrounding herself with a circle of bursting bombs to let any crab know what it might expect if it attempted to come near. Blazing and thundering, stern foremost, but stoutly, she rode the waves, ready to show the world that she was an impregnable British battle-ship, from which no enemy could snatch the royal colors which floated high above her.

It was during the first week of the involuntary cruise of the *Adamant* that the Syndicate finished its

preparations for what it hoped would be the decisive movement of its campaign. To do this, a repeller and six crabs, all with extraordinary powers, had been fitted out with great care, and also with great rapidity, for the British government was working night and day to get its fleet of ironclads in readiness for a descent upon the American coast. Many of the British vessels were already well prepared for ordinary naval warfare, but, to resist crabs, additional defences were necessary. It was known that the *Adamant* had been captured, and, consequently, the manufacture of stern-jackets had been abandoned, but it was believed that protection could be effectually given to rudders and propeller-blades by a new method which the admiralty had adopted.

The repeller which was to take part in the Syndicate's proposed movement had been a vessel of the United States Navy, which for a long time had been out of commission, and undergoing a course of very slow and desultory repairs in a dockyard. She had always been considered the most unlucky craft in the service, and nearly every accident that could happen to a ship had happened to her. Years and years before, when she would set out upon a cruise, her officers and crew would receive the humorous sympathy of their friends, and wagers were frequently laid in regard to the different kinds of mishaps which might befall this unlucky vessel, which was then known as the *Tallapoosa*.

The Syndicate did not particularly desire this vessel, but there was no other that could readily be made available for its purposes, and, accordingly, the *Tallapoosa* was purchased from the government and

work immediately begun upon her. Her engines and hull were put into good condition, and outside of her was built another hull, composed of heavy steel armor-plates, and strongly braced by great transverse beams running through the ship.

Still outside of this was placed an improved system of spring armor, much stronger and more effective than any which had yet been constructed. This, with the armor-plate, added nearly fifteen feet to the width of the vessel above water.

All her superstructures were removed from her deck, which was covered by a curved steel roof, and under a bomb-proof canopy at the bow were placed two guns, capable of carrying the largest-sized motor bombs. The *Tallapoosa*, thus transformed, was called Repeller No. 11.

The immense addition to her weight would, of course, interfere very much with the speed of the new repeller, but this was considered of little importance, as she would depend on her own engines only in time of action. She was now believed to possess more perfect defences than any battle-ship in the world.

Early on a misty morning, Repeller No. 11, towed by four of the swiftest and most powerful crabs, and followed by two others, left a northern port of the United States, bound for the coast of Great Britain. Her course was a very northerly one, for the reason that the Syndicate had planned work for her to do while on her way across the Atlantic.

The Syndicate had now determined, without unnecessarily losing an hour, plainly to demonstrate the power of the Instantaneous Motor bomb. It had been intended to do this upon the *Adamant*, but as it had

been found impossible to induce the captain of that vessel to evacuate his ship, the Syndicate had declined to exhibit the efficiency of their new agent of destruction upon a disabled craft crowded with human beings.

This course had been highly prejudicial to the claims of the Syndicate, for, as Repeller No. 7 had made no use, in the contest with the *Adamant*, of the motor bombs with which she was said to be supplied, it was generally believed, on both sides of the Atlantic, that she carried no such bombs, and the conviction that the destruction at the Canadian port had been effected by means of mines continued as strong as it had ever been. To correct these false ideas was now the duty of Repeller No. 11.

For some time, Great Britain had been steadily forwarding troops and munitions of war to Canada, without interruption from her enemy. Only once had the Syndicate's vessels appeared above the banks of Newfoundland, and, as the number of these peculiar craft must necessarily be small, it was not supposed that their line of operations would be extended very far north, and no danger from them was apprehended, provided the English vessels laid their courses well to the north.

Shortly before the sailing of Repeller No. 11, the Syndicate had received news that one of the largest transatlantic mail-steamers, loaded with troops and with heavy cannon for Canadian fortifications, and accompanied by the *Craglevin*, one of the largest iron-clads in the Royal Navy, had started across the Atlantic. The first business of the repeller and her attendant crabs concerned these two vessels.

Owing to the power and speed of the crabs which towed her, Repeller No. 11 made excellent time, and on the morning of the third day out the two British vessels were sighted. Somewhat altering their course, the Syndicate's vessels were soon within a few miles of the enemy.

The *Craglevin* was a magnificent war-ship. She was not quite so large as the *Adamant*, and she was unprovided with a stern-jacket or other defence of the kind. In sending her out, the admiralty had designed her to defend the transport against the regular vessels of the United States Navy, for, although the nature of the contract with the Syndicate was well understood in England, it was not supposed that the American government would long consent to allow their war-vessels to remain entirely idle.

When the captain of the *Craglevin* perceived the approach of the repeller, he was much surprised, but he did not hesitate for a moment as to his course. He signalled to the transport, then about a mile to the north, to keep on her way, while he steered to meet the enemy. It had been decided in British naval circles that the proper thing to do in regard to a repeller was to ram her as quickly as possible. These vessels were necessarily slow and unwieldy, and, if a heavy ironclad could keep clear of crabs long enough to rush down upon one, there was every reason to believe that the "ball-bouncer," as the repellers were called by British sailors, could be crushed in below the water-line and sunk. So, full of courage and determination, the captain of the *Craglevin* bore down upon the repeller.

It is not necessary to enter into details of the ensu-

ing action. Before the *Craglevin* was within half a mile of her enemy, she was seized by two crabs, which had cast loose from the repeller, and in less than twenty minutes both of her screws were extracted and her rudder shattered. In the meantime, two of the swiftest crabs had pursued the transport, and, coming up with her, one of them had fastened to her rudder, without, however, making any attempt to injure it. When the captain of the steamer saw that one of the "sea-devils" had him by the stern, while another was near by, ready to attack him, he prudently stopped his engines and lay to, the crab keeping his ship's head to the sea.

The captain of the *Craglevin* was a very different man from the captain of the *Adamant.* He was quite as brave, but he was wiser and more prudent. He saw that the transport had been captured and forced to lay to; he saw that the repeller mounted two heavy guns at her bow, and, whatever might be the character of those guns, there could be no reasonable doubt that they were sufficient to sink an ordinary mail-steamer. His own vessel was entirely out of his control, and even if he chose to try his guns on the spring armor of the repeller, it would probably result in the repeller turning her fire upon the transport.

With a disabled ship, and the lives of so many men in his charge, the captain of the *Craglevin* saw that it would be wrong for him to attempt to fight, and he did not fire a gun. With as much calmness as the circumstances would permit, he awaited the progress of events.

In a very short time, a message came to him from Repeller No. 11, which stated that in two hours his

ship would be destroyed by Instantaneous Motor bombs. Every opportunity, however, would be given for the transfer to the mail-steamer of all the officers and men on board the *Craglevin*, together with such of their possessions as they could take with them in that time. When this had been done, the transport would be allowed to proceed on her way.

To this demand nothing but acquiescence was possible. Whether or not there was such a thing as an Instantaneous Motor bomb the *Craglevin's* officers did not know, but they knew that, if left to herself, their ship would soon attend to her own sinking, for there was a terrible rent in her stern, owing to a pitch of the vessel while one of the propeller-shafts was being extracted.

Preparations for leaving the ship were, therefore, immediately begun. The crab was ordered to release the mail-steamer, which, in obedience to signals from the *Craglevin*, steamed as near that vessel as safety would permit. Boats were lowered from both ships, and the work of transfer went on with great activity.

There was no lowering of flags on board the *Craglevin*, for the Syndicate attached no importance to such outward signs and formalities. If the captain of the British ship chose to haul down his colors, he could do so, but if he preferred to leave them still bravely floating above his vessel, he was equally welcome to do that.

When nearly every one had left the *Craglevin*, a boat was sent from the repeller, which lay near by, with a note requesting the captain and first officer of the British ship to come on board Repeller No. 11 and witness the method of discharging the Instanta-

neous Motor bomb, after which they would be put on board the transport. This invitation struck the captain of the *Craglevin* with surprise, but a little reflection showed him that it would be wise to accept it. In the first place, it was in the nature of a command, which, in the presence of six crabs and a repeller, it would be ridiculous to disobey, and, moreover, he was moved by a desire to know something about the Syndicate's mysterious engine of destruction, if, indeed, such a thing really existed.

Accordingly, when all the others had left the ship, the captain of the *Craglevin* and his first officer came on board the repeller, curiously observing the spring armor, over which they passed by means of a light gang-board with a hand-rail. They were received by the director at one of the hatches of the steel deck, which were now all open, and conducted by him to the bomb-proof compartment in the bow. There was no reason why the nature of the repeller's defences should not be known to the world, nor adopted by other nations. They were intended as a protection against ordinary shot and shell. They would avail nothing against the Instantaneous Motor bomb.

The British officers were shown the motor bomb to be discharged, which, externally, was very much like an ordinary shell, except that it was nearly as long as the bore of the cannon, and the director stated that although, of course, the principle of the motor bomb was the Syndicate's secret, it was highly desirable that its effects and its methods of operation should be generally known.

The repeller accompanied by the mail-steamer and all the crabs, now moved to about two miles to the

leeward of the *Craglevin*, and lay to. The motor bomb was then placed in one of the great guns, while the scientific corps attended to the necessary calculations of distance, etc.

The director now turned to the British captain, who had been observing everything with the greatest interest, and, with a smile, asked him if he would like to commit hara-kiri?

As this remark was somewhat enigmatical, the director went on to say that if it would be any gratification to the captain to destroy his vessel with his own hands, instead of allowing this to be done by an enemy, he was at liberty to do so. This offer was immediately accepted, for if his ship were really to be destroyed, the captain felt that he would like to do it himself.

When the calculations had been made and the indicator set, the captain was shown the button he must press, and stood waiting for the signal. He looked over the sea at the *Craglevin*, which had settled a little at the stern, and was rolling heavily, but she was still a magnificent battle-ship, with the red cross of England floating over her. He could not help the thought that if this motor mystery should amount to nothing, there was no reason why the *Craglevin* should not be towed into port, and be made again the grand war-ship she had been.

Now the director gave the signal, and the captain, with his eyes fixed upon his ship, touched the button. A quick shock ran through the repeller, and a black-gray cloud, half a mile high, occupied the place of the British ship.

The cloud rapidly settled down, covering the water

with a glittering scum, which spread far and wide, and which had been the *Craglevin*.

The British captain stood, for a moment, motionless, and then he picked up a rammer and ran it into the muzzle of the cannon which had been discharged. The great gun was empty. The Instantaneous Motor bomb was not there.

Now he was convinced that the Syndicate had not mined the fortresses they had destroyed.

In twenty minutes the two British officers were on board the transport, which then steamed rapidly westward. The crabs again took the repeller in tow, and the Syndicate's fleet continued its eastward course, passing through the wide expanse of glittering scum, which had spread itself upon the sea.

They were not two thirds of their way across the Atlantic when the transport reached St. John's, and the cable told the world that the *Craglevin* had been annihilated.

The news was received with amazement and even consternation. It came from an officer in the Royal Navy, and how could it be doubted that a great man-of-war had been destroyed in a moment by one shot from the Syndicate's vessel! And yet, even now, there were persons who did doubt, and who asserted that the crabs might have placed a great torpedo under the *Craglevin*, that a wire attached to this torpedo ran out from the repeller, and that the British captain had merely fired the torpedo. But, hour by hour, as fuller news came across the ocean, the number of these doubters became smaller and smaller.

In the midst of the great public excitement which now existed on both sides of the Atlantic,—in the

midst of all the conflicting opinions, fears, and hopes, —the dominant sentiment seemed to be, in America as well as in Europe, one of curiosity. Were these six crabs and one repeller bound to the British Isles? And, if so, what did they intend to do when they got there?

It was now generally admitted that one of the Syndicate's crabs could disable a man-of-war, that one of the Syndicate's repellers could withstand the heaviest artillery fire, and that one of the Syndicate's motor bombs could destroy a vessel or a fort. But these things had been proved in isolated combats, where the new methods of attack and defence had had almost undisturbed opportunity for exhibiting their efficiency. But what could a repeller and half a dozen crabs do against the combined force of the Royal Navy—a navy which had, in the last few years, regained its supremacy among the nations, and which had made Great Britain once more the first maritime power in the world?

The crabs might disable some men-of-war, the repeller might make her calculations and discharge her bomb at a ship or a fort, but what would the main body of the navy be doing meanwhile? Overwhelming, crushing, and sinking to the bottom, crabs, repeller, motor guns, and everything that belonged to them!

In England there was a feeling of strong resentment that such a little fleet should be allowed to sail with such intent into British waters. This resentment extended itself, not only to the impudent Syndicate, but toward the government, and the opposition party gained daily in strength. The opposition

papers had been loud and reckless in their denunciations of the slowness and inadequacy of the naval preparations, and loaded the government with the entire responsibility, not only of the damage which had already been done to the forts, the ships, and the prestige of Great Britain, but also for the threatened danger of a sudden descent of the Syndicate's fleet upon some unprotected point upon the coast. This fleet should never have been allowed to approach within a thousand miles of England. It should have been sunk in mid-ocean, if its sinking had involved the loss of a dozen men-of-war.

In America a very strong feeling of dissatisfaction showed itself. From the first, the Syndicate contract had not been popular, but the quick, effective, and business-like action of that body of men, and the marked success, up to this time, of their inventions and their operations, had caused a great reaction in their favor. They had, so far, successfully defended the American coast, and when they had increased the number of their vessels, they would have been relied upon to continue that defence. Even if a British armada had set out to cross the Atlantic, its movements must have been slow and cumbrous, and the swift and sudden strokes with which the Syndicate waged war could have been given, by night and by day, over thousands of miles of ocean.

Whether or not these strokes would have been quick enough or hard enough to turn back an armada, might be a question, but there could be no question of the suicidal policy of sending seven ships and two cannon to conquer England. It seemed as if the success of the Syndicate had so puffed up its members

with pride and confidence in their powers that they had come to believe they had only to show themselves to conquer, whatever might be the conditions of the contest.

The destruction of the Syndicate's fleet would now be a heavy blow to the United States. It would produce an utter want of confidence in the councils and judgments of the Syndicate, which could not be counteracted by the strongest faith in the efficiency of their engines of war, and it was feared it might become necessary, even at this critical juncture, to annul the contract with the Syndicate, and to depend upon the American Navy for the defence of the American coast.

Even among the men on board the Syndicate's fleet, there were signs of doubt and apprehensions of evil. It had all been very well, so far, but fighting one ship at a time was a very different thing from steaming into the midst of a hundred ships. On board the repeller there was now an additional reason for fears and misgivings. The unlucky character of the vessel when it had been the *Tallapoosa* was known, and not a few of the men imagined that it must now be time for some new disaster to this ill-starred craft, and if her evil genius had desired fresh disaster for her, it was certainly sending her into a good place to look for it.

But the Syndicate neither doubted, nor hesitated, nor paid any attention to the doubts and condemnations which they heard from every quarter. Four days after the news of the destruction of the *Craglevin* had been cabled from Canada to London, the Syndicate's fleet entered the English Channel. Owing

to the power and speed of the crabs, Repeller No. 11 had made a passage of the Atlantic which, in her old naval career, would have been considered miraculous.

Craft of various kinds were now passed, but none of them carried the British flag. In expectation of the arrival of the enemy, British merchantmen and fishing-vessels had been advised to keep in the background until the British navy had concluded its business with the vessels of the American Syndicate.

As has been said before, the British admiralty had adopted a new method of defence for the rudders and screw-propellers of naval vessels against the attacks of submerged craft. The work of constructing the new appliances had been pushed forward as fast as possible, but, so far, only one of these had been finished and attached to a man-of-war.

The *Llangaron* was a recently built ironclad of the same size and class as the *Adamant*, and to her had been attached the new stern-defence. This was an immense steel cylinder, entirely closed, and rounded at the ends. It was about ten feet in diameter, and strongly braced inside. It was suspended by chains from two davits which projected over the stern of the vessel. When sailing, this cylinder was hoisted up to the davits, but when the ship was prepared for action, it was lowered until it lay, nearly submerged, abaft of the rudder. In this position its ends projected about fifteen feet on either side of the propeller-blades.

It was believed that this cylinder would effectually prevent a crab from getting near enough to the propeller or the rudder to do any damage. It could not be torn away, as the stern-jacket had been, for the

rounded and smooth sides and ends of the massive cylinder would offer no hold to the forceps of the crabs, and, approaching from any quarter, it would be impossible for these forceps to reach rudder or screw.

The Syndicate's little fleet arrived in British waters late in the day, and early the next morning it appeared about twenty miles to the south of the Isle of Wight, and headed to the northeast, as if it were making for Portsmouth. The course of these vessels greatly surprised the English government and naval authorities. It had been expected that an attack would probably be made upon some comparatively unprotected spot on the British seaboard, and, therefore, on the west coast of Ireland and in St. George's Channel preparations of the most formidable character had been made to defend British ports against Repeller No. 11 and her attendant crabs. Particularly was this the case in Bristol Channel, where a large number of ironclads were stationed, and which was to have been the destination of the *Llangaron*, if the Syndicate's vessels had delayed their coming long enough to allow her to get around there. That this little fleet should have sailed straight for England's great naval stronghold was something that the British Admiralty could not understand. The fact was not appreciated that it was the object of the Syndicate to measure its strength with the greatest strength of the enemy. Anything less than this would not avail its purpose.

Notwithstanding that so many vessels had been sent to different parts of the coast, there was still in Portsmouth harbor a large number of war-vessels of various

classes, all in commission and ready for action. The greater part of these had received orders to cruise that day in the Channel. Consequently, it was still early in the morning when, around the eastern end of the Isle of Wight, there appeared a British fleet, composed of fifteen of the finest ironclads, with several gunboats and cruisers, and a number of torpedo-boats.

It was a noble sight, for, besides the war-ships, there was another fleet, hanging upon the outskirts of the first, composed of craft, large and small, from both sides of the Channel, and filled with those who were anxious to witness from afar the sea-fight which was to take place under such novel conditions. Many of these observers were reporters and special correspondents for great newspapers. On some of the vessels which came up from the French coast were men with marine glasses of extraordinary power, whose business it was to send an early and accurate report of the affair to the office of the War Syndicate in New York.

As soon as the British ships came in sight, the four crabs cast off from Repeller No. 11. Then, with the other two, they prepared for action, moving considerably in advance of the repeller, which now steamed forward very slowly. The wind was strong from the northwest, and the sea high, the shining tops of the crabs frequently disappearing under the waves.

The British fleet came steadily on, headed by the great *Llangaron*. This vessel was very much in advance of the others, for, knowing that when she was really in action, and the great cylinder which formed her stern-guard was lowered into the water, her speed would be much retarded, she had put on all steam,

and, being the swiftest war-ship of her class, she had distanced all her consorts. It was highly important that she should begin the fight, and engage the attention of as many crabs as possible, while certain of the other ships attacked the repeller with their rams. Although it was now generally believed that motor bombs from a repeller might destroy a man-of-war, it was also considered probable that the accurate calculations which appeared to be necessary to precision of aim could not be made when the object of the aim was in rapid motion.

But, whether or not one or more motor bombs did strike the mark, or whether or not one or more vessels were blown into fine particles, there were a dozen ironclads in that fleet, each of whose commanders and officers was determined to run into that repeller and crush her, if so be it they held together long enough to reach her.

The commanders of the torpedo-boats had orders to direct their swift messengers of destruction first against the crabs, for these vessels were far in advance of the repeller, and coming on with a rapidity which showed that they were determined upon mischief. If a torpedo, shot from a torpedo-boat, and speeding swiftly by its own powers beneath the waves, should strike the submerged hull of a crab, there would be one crab the less in the English Channel.

As has been said, the *Llangaron* came rushing on, distancing everything, even the torpedo-boats. If, before she was obliged to lower her cylinder, she could get near enough to the almost stationary repeller to take part in the attack on her, she would

then be content to slacken speed and let the crabs nibble awhile at her stern.

Two of the latest constructed and largest crabs, Q and R, headed at full speed to meet the *Llangaron*, who, as she came on, opened the ball by sending a "rattler" in the shape of a five-hundred-pound shot into the ribs of the repeller, then at least four miles distant, and, immediately after, began firing her dynamite guns, which were of limited range, at the roofs of the advancing crabs.

There were some on board the repeller who, at the moment the great shot struck her, with a ringing and clangor of steel springs, such as never was heard before, wished that in her former state of existence she had been some other vessel than the *Tallapoosa*.

But every spring sprang back to its place as the great mass of iron glanced off into the sea. The dynamite bombs flew over the tops of the crabs, whose rapid motions and slightly exposed surfaces gave little chance for accurate aim, and in a short time they were too close to the *Llangaron* for this class of gun to be used upon them.

As the crabs came nearer, the *Llangaron* lowered the great steel cylinder, which hung across her stern, until it lay almost entirely under water and abaft of her rudder and propeller-blades. She now moved slowly through the water, and her men greeted the advancing crabs with yells of defiance, and a shower of shot from machine-guns.

The character of the new defence which had been fitted to the *Llangaron* was known to the Syndicate, and the directors of the two new crabs understood the heavy piece of work which lay before them. But

their plans of action had been well considered, and they made straight for the stern of the British ship.

It was, of course, impossible to endeavor to grasp that great cylinder with its rounded ends. Their forceps would slip from any portion of its smooth surface on which they should endeavor to lay hold, and no such attempt was made. Keeping near the cylinder, one at each end of it, the two moved slowly after the *Llangaron*, apparently discouraged.

In a short time, however, it was perceived by those on board the ship that a change had taken place in the appearance of the crabs. The visible portion of their backs was growing larger and larger. They were rising in the water. Their mailed roofs became visible from end to end, and the crowd of observers looking down from the ship were amazed to see what large vessels they were.

Higher and higher the crabs arose, their powerful air-pumps working at their greatest capacity, until their ponderous pincers became visible above the water. Then into the minds of the officers of the *Llangaron* flashed the true object of this uprising, which to the crew had seemed an intention, on the part of the sea-devils, to clamber on board.

If the cylinder were left in its present position, the crab might seize the chains by which it was suspended, while, if it were raised, it would cease to be a defence. Notwithstanding this latter contingency, the order was quickly given to raise the cylinder. But, before the hoisting-engine had been set in motion, Crab Q thrust forward her forceps over the top of the cylinder and held it down. Another thrust, and the iron jaws

had grasped one of the two ponderous chains by which the cylinder was suspended.

The other end of the cylinder began to rise, but at this moment Crab R, apparently by a single effort, lifted herself a foot higher out of the sea, her pincers flashed forward, and the other chain was grasped.

The two crabs were now placed in the most extraordinary position. The overhang of their roofs prevented an attack on their hulls by the *Llangaron*, but their unmailed hulls were so greatly exposed that a few shot from another ship could easily have destroyed them. But, as any ship firing at them would be very likely to hit the *Llangaron*, their directors felt safe on this point.

Three of the foremost ironclads, less than two miles away, were heading directly for them, and their rams might be used with but little danger to the *Llangaron*, but, on the other hand, three swift crabs were heading directly for these ironclads.

It was impossible for Crabs Q and R to operate in the usual way. Their massive forceps, lying flat against the top of the cylinder, could not be twisted. The enormous chains they held could not be severed by the greatest pressure, and if both crabs backed at once they would probably do no more than tow the *Llangaron*, stern foremost. There was, moreover, no time to waste in experiments, for other rams would be coming on, and there were not crabs enough to attend to them all.

No time was wasted. Q signalled to R, and R back again, and instantly the two crabs, each still grasping a chain of the cylinder, began to sink. On board the *Llangaron* an order was shouted to let out the cylinder

chains. But as these chains had only been made long enough to allow the top of the cylinder to hang at or a little below the surface of the water, a foot or two of length was all that could be gained.

The davits from which the cylinder hung were thick and strong, and the iron windlasses to which the chains were attached were large and ponderous, but these were not strong enough to withstand the weight of two crabs with steel-armored roofs, enormous engines, and iron hull. In less than a minute one davit snapped like a pipe-stem under the tremendous strain, and, immediately afterwards, the windlass to which the chain was attached was torn from its bolts, and went crashing overboard, tearing away a portion of the stern-rail in its descent.

Crab Q instantly released the chain it had held, and in a moment the great cylinder hung almost perpendicularly from one chain—but only for a moment. The nippers of Crab R still firmly held the chain, and the tremendous leverage exerted by the falling of one end of the cylinder wrenched it from the rigidly held end of its chain, and, in a flash, the enormous stern-guard of the *Llangaron* sunk, end foremost, to the bottom of the Channel.

In ten minutes afterwards, the *Llangaron*, rudderless, and with the blades of her propellers shivered and crushed, was slowly turning her starboard to the wind and the sea, and beginning to roll like a log of eight thousand tons.

Besides the *Llangaron*, three ironclads were now drifting broadside to the sea. But there was no time to succor disabled vessels, for the rest of the fleet

was coming on, and there was great work for the crabs.

Against these enemies, swift of motion and sudden in action, the torpedo-boats found it almost impossible to operate, for the British ships and the crabs were so rapidly nearing each other that a torpedo sent out against an enemy was more than likely to run against the hull of a friend. Each crab sped at the top of its speed for a ship, not only to attack, but also to protect itself.

Once only did the crabs give the torpedo-boats a chance. A mile or two north of the scene of action, a large cruiser was making her way rapidly toward the repeller, which was still lying almost motionless, four miles to the westward. As it was highly probable that this vessel carried dynamite guns, Crab Q, which was the fastest of her class, was signalled to go after her. She had scarcely begun her course across the open space of sea before a torpedo-boat was in pursuit. Fast as was the latter, the crab was faster, and quite as easily managed. She was in a position of great danger, and her only safety lay in keeping herself on a line between the torpedo-boat and the gunboat, and to shorten as quickly as possible the distance between herself and the latter vessel.

If the torpedo-boat shot to one side in order to get the crab out of line, the crab, its back sometimes hidden by the tossing waves, sped also to the same side. When the torpedo-boat could aim a gun at the crab, and not at the gunboat, a deadly torpedo flew into the sea. But a tossing sea and a shifting target were unfavorable to the gunner's aim. It was not

long, however, before the crab had run the chase which might so readily have been fatal to it, and was so near the gunboat that no more torpedoes could be fired at it.

Of course the officers and crew of the gunboat had watched with most anxious interest the chase of the crab. The vessel was one which had been fitted out for service with dynamite guns, of which she carried some of very long range for this class of artillery, and she had been ordered to get astern of the repeller and to do her best to put a few dynamite bombs on board of her.

The dynamite gunboat, therefore, had kept ahead at full speed, determined to carry out her instructions, if she should be allowed to do so. But her speed was not as great as that of a crab, and when the torpedo-boat had given up the chase, and the dreaded crab was drawing swiftly near, the captain thought it time for bravery to give place to prudence. With the large amount of explosive material of the most tremendous and terrific character which he had on board, it would be the insanity of courage for him to allow his comparatively small vessel to be racked, shaken, and partially shivered by the powerful jaws of the oncoming foe. As he could neither fly nor fight, he hauled down his flag in token of surrender, the first instance of the kind which had occurred in this war.

When the director of Crab Q, through his lookout glass, beheld this action on the part of the gunboat, he was a little perplexed as to what he should next do. To accept the surrender of the British vessel, and to assume control of her, it was necessary to commu-

nicate with her. The communications of the crabs were made entirely by black smoke signals, and these the captain of the gunboat could not understand. The heavy hatches in the mailed roof, which could be put in use when the crab was cruising, could not be opened when she was at her fighting depth and in a tossing sea.

A means was soon devised of communicating with the gunboat. A speaking-tube was run up through one of the air-pipes of the crab, which pipe was then elevated some distance above the surface. Through this the director hailed the other vessel, and as the air-pipe was near the stern of the crab, and, therefore, at a distance from the only visible portion of the turtle-back roof, his voice seemed to come out of the depths of the ocean.

The surrender was accepted, and the captain of the gunboat was ordered to stop his engines and prepare to be towed. When this order had been given, the crab moved round to the bow of the gunboat, and grasping the cut-water with its forceps, reversed its engines, and began to back rapidly toward the British fleet, taking with it the captured vessel as a protection against torpedoes while in transit.

The crab slowed up not far from one of the foremost of the British ships, and coming round to the quarter of the gunboat, the astonished captain of that vessel was informed, through the speaking-tube, that if he would give his parole to keep out of this fight, he would be allowed to proceed to his anchorage in Portsmouth harbor. The parole was given, and the dynamite gunboat, after reporting to the flagship, steamed away to Portsmouth.

The situation now became one which was unparalleled in the history of naval warfare. On the side of the British, seven war-ships were disabled and drifting slowly to the southeast. For half an hour no advance had been made by the British fleet, for, whenever one of the large vessels had steamed ahead, that vessel had become the victim of a crab, and the Vice-Admiral commanding the fleet had signalled not to advance until further orders.

The crabs were also lying to, each to the windward of, and not far from, one of the British ships. They had ceased to make any attacks, and were resting quietly under protection of the enemy. This, with the fact that the repeller still lay four miles away, without any apparent intention of taking part in the battle, gave the situation its peculiar character.

The British Vice-Admiral did not intend to remain in this quiescent condition. It was, of course, useless to order forth his ironclads, simply to see them disabled and set adrift. There was another arm of the service which evidently could be used with better effect upon this peculiar foe than could the great battle-ships.

But before doing anything else, he must provide for the safety of those of his vessels which had been rendered helpless by the crabs, and some of which were now drifting dangerously near to each other. Despatches had been sent to Portsmouth for tugs, but it would not do to wait until these arrived, and a sufficient number of ironclads were detailed to tow their injured consorts into port.

When this order had been given, the Vice-Admiral immediately prepared to renew the fight, and this

time his efforts were to be directed entirely against the repeller. It would be useless to devote any further attention to the crabs, especially in their present positions. But if the chief vessel of the Syndicate's fleet, with its spring armor and its terrible earthquake bombs, could be destroyed, it was quite possible that those sea-parasites, the crabs, could also be disposed of.

Every torpedo-boat was now ordered to the front, and in a long line, almost abreast of each other, these swift vessels—the light infantry of the sea—advanced upon the solitary and distant foe. If one torpedo could but reach her hull, the Vice-Admiral, in spite of seven disabled ironclads and a captured gunboat, might yet gaze proudly at his floating flag, even if his own ship should be drifting broadside to the sea.

The line of torpedo-boats, slightly curving inward, had advanced about a mile, when Repeller No. 11 awoke from her seeming sleep, and began to act. The two great guns at her bow were trained upward, so that a bomb discharged from them would fall into the sea a mile and a half ahead. Slowly turning her bow from side to side, so that the guns would cover a range of nearly half a circle, the Instantaneous Motor bombs of the repeller were discharged, one every half-minute.

One of the most appalling characteristics of the motor bombs was the silence which accompanied their discharge and action. No noise was heard, except the flash of sound occasioned by the removal of the particles of the object aimed at, and the subsequent roar of wind or fall of water.

As each motor bomb dropped into the Channel, a

dense cloud appeared high in the air, above a roaring, seething caldron, hollowed out of the waters and out of the very bottom of the Channel. Into this chasm the cloud quickly came down, condensed into a vast body of water, which fell, with the roar of a cyclone, into the dreadful abyss from which it had been torn, before the hissing walls of the great hollow had half filled it with their sweeping surges. The piled-up mass of the redundant water was still sending its maddened billows tossing and writhing in every direction toward their normal level, when another bomb was discharged, another surging abyss appeared, another roar of wind and water was heard, and another mountain of furious billows uplifted itself in a storm of spray and foam, raging that it had found its place usurped.

Slowly turning, the repeller discharged bomb after bomb, building up out of the very sea itself a barrier against its enemies. Under these thundering cataracts, born in an instant, and coming down all at once in a plunging storm, into these abysses, with walls of water and floors of cleft and shivered rocks, through this wide belt of raging turmoil, thrown into new frenzy after the discharge of every bomb, no vessel, no torpedo, could pass.

The air, driven off in every direction by tremendous and successive concussions, came rushing back in shrieking gales, which tore up the waves into blinding foam. For miles in every direction the sea swelled and upheaved into great, peaked waves, the repeller rising upon these almost high enough to look down into the awful chasms which her bombs were making. A torpedo-boat, caught in one of the returning gales, was

hurled forward almost on her beam ends, until she was under the edge of one of the vast masses of descending water. The flood which, from even the outer limits of this falling sea, poured upon and into the unlucky vessel, nearly swamped her, and when she was swept back by the rushing waves into less stormy waters, her officers and crew leaped into their boats and deserted her. By rare good fortune, their boats were kept afloat in the turbulent sea until they reached the nearest torpedo-vessel.

Five minutes afterwards, a small but carefully aimed motor bomb struck the nearly swamped vessel, and, with the roar of all her own torpedoes, she passed into nothing.

The British Vice-Admiral had carefully watched the repeller through his glass, and he noticed that, simultaneously with the appearance of the cloud in the air produced by the action of the motor bombs, there were two puffs of black smoke from the repeller. These were signals to the crabs, to notify them that a motor gun had been discharged, and thus to provide against accidents in case a bomb should fail to act. One puff signified that a bomb had been discharged to the north; two, that it had gone eastward; and so on. If, therefore, a crab should see a signal of this kind, and perceive no signs of the action of a bomb, it would be careful not to approach the repeller from the quarter indicated. It is true that, in case of the failure of a bomb to act, another bomb would be dropped upon the same spot, but the instructions of the War Syndicate provided that every possible precaution should be taken against accidents.

Of course the Vice-Admiral did not understand

these signals, nor did he know that they were signals, but he knew that they accompanied the discharge of a motor gun. Once he noticed that there was a short cessation in the hitherto constant succession of water avalanches, and during this lull he had seen two puffs from the repeller, and the destruction, at the same moment, of the deserted torpedo-boat. It was, therefore, plain enough to him that if a motor bomb could be placed so accurately upon one torpedo-boat, and with such terrible result, other bombs could quite as easily be discharged upon the other torpedo-boats, which formed the advance-line of the fleet. When the barrier of storm and cataract again began to stretch itself in front of the repeller, he knew that not only was it impossible for the torpedo-boats to send their missives through this raging turmoil, but that each of these vessels was itself in danger of instantaneous destruction.

Unwilling, therefore, to expose his vessels to profitless danger, the Vice-Admiral ordered the torpedo-boats to retire from the front, and the whole line of them proceeded to a point north of the fleet, where they lay to.

When this had been done, the repeller ceased the discharge of bombs, but the sea was still heaving and tossing after the storm, when a despatch-boat brought orders from the British Admiralty to the flag-ship. Communication between the British fleet and the shore, and, consequently, London, had been constant, and all that had occurred had been quickly made known to the admiralty and the government. The orders now received by the Vice-Admiral were to the effect that it was considered judicious to discontinue

the conflict for the day, and that he and his whole fleet should return to Portsmouth to receive further orders.

In issuing these commands, the British government was actuated simply by motives of humanity and common sense. The British fleet was thoroughly prepared for ordinary naval warfare, but an enemy had inaugurated another kind of naval warfare, for which it was not prepared. It was, therefore, decided to withdraw the ships until they should be prepared for the new kind of warfare. To allow ironclad after ironclad to be disabled and set adrift, to subject every ship in the fleet to the danger of instantaneous destruction, and all this without the possibility of inflicting injury upon the enemy, would not be bravery : it would be stupidity. It was surely possible to devise a means for destroying the seven hostile ships now in British waters. Until action for this end could be taken, it was the part of wisdom for the British Navy to confine itself to the protection of British ports.

When the fleet began to move toward the Isle of Wight, the six crabs, which had been lying quietly among and under the protection of their enemies, withdrew southward, and, making a slight circuit, joined the repeller.

Each of the disabled ironclads was now in tow of a sister vessel, or of tugs, except the *Llangaron*. This great ship had been disabled so early in the contest, and her broadside had presented such a vast surface to the northwest wind, that she had drifted much farther to the south than any other vessel. Consequently, before the arrival of the tugs which had

been sent for to tow her into harbor, the *Llangaron* was well on her way across the Channel. A foggy night came on, and the next morning she was ashore on the coast of France, with a mile of water between her and dry land. Fast rooted in a great sand-bank, she lay week after week, with the storms that came in from the Atlantic, and the storms that came in from the German Ocean, beating upon her tall side of solid iron, with no more effect than if it had been a precipice of rock. Against waves and winds she formed a massive breakwater, with a wide stretch of smooth sea between her and the land. There she lay, proof against all the artillery of Europe, and all the artillery of the sea and the storm, until a fleet of small vessels had taken from her her ponderous armament, her coal and stores, and she had been lightened enough to float upon a high tide, and to follow three tugs to Portsmouth.

When night came on, Repeller No. 11 and the crabs dropped down with the tide, and lay to some miles west of the scene of battle. The fog shut them in fairly well, but, fearful that torpedoes might be sent out against them, they showed no lights. There was little danger of collision with passing merchantmen, for the English Channel, at present, was deserted by this class of vessels.

The next morning the repeller, preceded by two crabs, bearing between them a submerged net similar to that used at the Canadian port, appeared off the eastern end of the Isle of Wight. The anchors of the net were dropped, and behind it the repeller took her place, and shortly afterwards she sent a flag-of-truce boat to Portsmouth harbor. This boat carried a note

from the American War Syndicate to the British government.

In this note it was stated that it was now the intention of the Syndicate to utterly destroy, by means of the Instantaneous Motor, a fortified post upon the British coast. As this would be done solely for the purpose of demonstrating the irresistible, destructive power of the motor bombs, it was immaterial to the Syndicate what fortified post should be destroyed, provided it should answer the requirements of the proposed demonstration. Consequently, the British government was offered the opportunity of naming the fortified place which should be destroyed. If said government should decline to do this, or delay the selection for twenty-four hours, the Syndicate would itself decide upon the place to be operated upon.

Every one in every branch of the British government, and, in fact, nearly every thinking person in the British Islands, had been racking his brains, or her brains, that night, over the astounding situation, and the note of the Syndicate only added to the perturbation of the government. There was a strong feeling in official circles that the insolent little enemy must be crushed, if the whole British Navy should have to rush upon it, and all sink together in a common grave.

But there were cooler and more prudent brains at the head of affairs, and these had already decided that the contest between the old engines of war and the new ones was entirely one-sided. The instincts of good government dictated to them that they should be extremely wary and circumspect during the further continuance of this unexampled war.

Therefore, when the note of the Syndicate was considered, it was agreed that the time had come when good statesmanship and wise diplomacy would be more valuable to the nation than torpedoes, armored ships, or heavy guns.

There was not the slightest doubt that the country would disagree with the government, but on the latter lay the responsibility of the country's safety. There was nothing, in the opinion of the ablest naval officers, to prevent the Syndicate's fleet from coming up the Thames. Instantaneous Motor bombs could sweep away all forts and citadels, and explode and destroy all torpedo defences, and London might lie under the guns of the repeller.

In consequence of this view of the state of affairs, an answer was sent to the Syndicate's note, asking that further time be given for the consideration of the situation, and suggesting that an exhibition of the power of the motor bomb was not necessary, as sufficient proof of this had been given in the destruction of the Canadian forts, the annihilation of the *Craglevin*, and the extraordinary results of the discharge of said bombs on the preceding day.

To this a reply was sent from the office of the Syndicate in New York, by means of a cable-boat from the French coast, that on no account could their purpose be altered or their propositions modified. Although the British government might be convinced of the power of the Syndicate's motor bombs, it was not the case with the British people, for it was still popularly disbelieved that motor bombs existed. This disbelief the Syndicate was determined to overcome, not only for the furtherance of its own pur-

poses, but to prevent the downfall of the present British ministry, and a probable radical change in the government. That such a political revolution—as undesirable to the Syndicate as to cool-headed and sensible Englishmen—was imminent, there could be no doubt. The growing feeling of disaffection, almost amounting to disloyalty, not only in the opposition party, but among those who had hitherto been firm adherents of the government, was mainly based upon the idea that the present British rulers had allowed themselves to be frightened by mines and torpedoes, artfully placed and exploded. Therefore, the Syndicate intended to set right the public mind upon this subject. The note concluded by earnestly urging the designation, without loss of time, of a place of operations.

This answer was received in London in the evening, and all night it was the subject of earnest and anxious deliberation in the government offices. It was at last decided, amid great opposition, that the Syndicate's alternative must be accepted, for it would be the height of folly to allow the repeller to bombard any port she should choose. When this conclusion had been reached, the work of selecting a place for the proposed demonstration of the American Syndicate occupied but little time. The task was not difficult. Nowhere in Great Britain was there a fortified spot of so little importance as Caerdaff, on the west coast of Wales.

Caerdaff consisted of a large fort on a promontory, and an immense castellated structure on the other side of a small bay, with a little fishing-village at the head of said bay. The castellated structure was rather

old, the fortress somewhat less so, and both had long been considered useless, as there was no probability that an enemy would land at this point on the coast.

Caerdaff was, therefore, selected as the spot to be operated upon. No one could, for a moment, imagine that the Syndicate had mined this place, and if it should be destroyed by motor bombs, it would prove to the country that the government had not been frightened by the tricks of a crafty enemy.

An hour after the receipt of the note in which it was stated that Caerdaff had been selected, the Syndicate's fleet started for that place. The crabs were elevated to cruising height, the repeller taken in tow, and by the afternoon of the next day the fleet was lying off Caerdaff. A note was sent on shore to the officer in command, stating that the bombardment would begin at ten o'clock in the morning of the next day but one, and requesting that information of the hour appointed be instantly transmitted to London. When this had been done, the fleet steamed six or seven miles offshore, where it lay to or cruised about for two nights and a day.

As soon as the government had selected Caerdaff for bombardment, immediate measures were taken to remove the small garrisons and the inhabitants of the fishing-village from possible danger. When the Syndicate's note was received by the commandant of the fort, he was already in receipt of orders from the War Office to evacuate the fortifications, and to superintend the removal of the fishermen and their families to a point of safety farther up the coast.

Caerdaff was a place difficult of access by land, the nearest railroad stations being fifteen or twenty miles

away, but, on the day after the arrival of the Syndicate's fleet in the offing, thousands of people made their way to this part of the country, anxious to see —if, perchance, they might find an opportunity to safely see—what might happen at ten o'clock the next morning. Officers of the army and navy, government officials, press correspondents in great numbers, and curious and anxious observers of all classes, hastened to the Welsh coast.

The little towns where the visitors left the trains were crowded to overflowing, and every possible conveyance by which the mountains lying back of Caerdaff could be reached, was eagerly secured, many persons, however, being obliged to depend upon their own legs. Soon after sunrise on the appointed day, the forts, the village, and the surrounding lower country were entirely deserted, and every point of vantage on the mountains, lying some miles back from the coast, was occupied by excited spectators, nearly every one armed with a field-glass.

A few of the guns from the fortifications were transported to an overlooking height, in order that they might be brought into action in case the repeller, instead of bombarding, should send men in boats to take possession of the evacuated fortifications, or should attempt any mining operations. The gunners for this battery were stationed at a safe place in the rear, whence they could readily reach their guns, if necessary.

The next day was one of supreme importance to the Syndicate. On this day it must make plain to the world, not only what the motor bomb could do, but that the motor bomb did what was done. Before

leaving the English Channel, the director of Repeller No. 11 had received telegraphic advices from both Europe and America, indicating the general drift of public opinion in regard to the recent sea-fight, and, besides these, many English and Continental papers had been brought to him from the French coast.

From all these, the director perceived that the cause of the Syndicate had, in a certain way, suffered from the manner in which the battle in the Channel had been conducted. Every newspaper urged, that, if the repeller carried guns capable of throwing the bombs which the Syndicate professed to use, there was no reason why every ship in the British fleet should not have been destroyed. But, as the repeller had not fired a single shot at the fleet, and as the battle had been fought entirely by the crabs, there was every reason to believe that, if there were such things as motor guns, their range was very short, not as great as that of the ordinary dynamite cannon. The great risk run by one of the crabs in order to disable a dynamite gunboat seemed an additional proof of this.

It was urged that the explosions in the water might have been produced by torpedoes, that the torpedo-boat which had been destroyed was so near the repeller that an ordinary shell was sufficient to accomplish the damage that had been done.

To gainsay these assumptions was imperative on the Syndicate's forces. To establish firmly the prestige of the Instantaneous Motor was the object of the war. Crabs were of but temporary service. Any nation could build vessels like them, and there were many means of destroying them. The spring armor

was a complete defence against ordinary artillery, but it was not a defence against submarine torpedoes. The claims of the Syndicate could be firmly based on nothing but the powers of absolute annihilation possessed by the Instantaneous Motor bomb.

About nine o'clock on the appointed morning, Repeller No. 11, much to the surprise of the spectators on the high grounds with field-glasses and telescopes, steamed away from Caerdaff. What this meant nobody knew, but the naval and military observers immediately suspected that the Syndicate's vessel had concentrated attention upon Caerdaff in order to go over to Ireland to do some sort of mischief there. It was presumed that the crabs accompanied her, but, as they were now at their fighting depth, it was impossible to see them at so great a distance.

But it was soon perceived that Repeller No. 11 had no intention of running away, nor of going over to Ireland. From slowly cruising about four or five miles offshore, she had steamed westward until she had reached a point which, according to the calculations of her scientific corps, was nine marine miles from Caerdaff. There she lay to against a strong breeze from the east.

It was not yet ten o'clock when the officer in charge of the starboard gun remarked to the director that he supposed that it would not be necessary to give the smoke signals, as had been done in the Channel, as now all the crabs were lying near them. The director reflected a moment, and then ordered that the signals should be given at every discharge of the gun, and that the columns of black smoke should be shot up to their greatest height.

At precisely ten o'clock, up rose from Repeller No. 11 two tall jets of black smoke. Up rose from the promontory of Caerdaff a heavy gray cloud, like an immense balloon, and then the people on the hilltops and highlands felt a sharp shock of the ground and rocks beneath them, and heard the sound of a terrible, but momentary, grinding crush.

As the cloud began to settle, it was borne out to sea by the wind, and then it was revealed that the fortifications of Caerdaff had disappeared.

In ten minutes there was another smoke signal, and a great cloud appeared over the castellated structure on the other side of the bay. The cloud passed away, leaving a vacant space on the other side of the bay.

The second shock sent a panic through the crowd of spectators. The next earthquake bomb might strike among them! Down the eastern slopes ran hundreds of them, leaving only a few of the bravest civilians, the reporters of the press, and the naval and military men.

The next motor bomb descended into the fishing-village, the comminuted particles of which, being mostly of light material, floated far out to sea.

The detachment of artillerists that had been deputed to man the guns on the heights which commanded the bay, had been ordered to fall back to the mountains as soon as it had been seen that it was not the intention of the repeller to send boats on shore. The most courageous of the spectators trembled a little when the fourth bomb was discharged, for it came farther inland, and struck the height on which the battery had been placed, removing all vestiges of the guns, caissons, and the ledge of rock on which they had stood.

The motor bombs which the repeller was now discharging were of the largest size and greatest power, and a dozen more of them were discharged at intervals of a few minutes. The promontory on which the fortifications had stood was annihilated, and the waters of the bay swept over its foundations. Soon afterwards the head of the bay seemed madly rushing out to sea, but quickly surged back to fill the chasm which yawned at the spot where the village had been.

The dense clouds were now upheaved at such short intervals that the scene of devastation was completely shut out from the observers on the hills, but every few minutes they felt a sickening shock, and heard a momentary and horrible crash and hiss, which seemed to fill all the air. The Instantaneous Motor bombs were tearing up the seaboard and grinding it to atoms.

It was not yet noon when the bombardment ceased. No more puffs of black smoke came up from the distant repeller, and the vast spreading mass of clouds moved seaward, dropping down upon St. George's Channel in a rain of stone-dust. Then the repeller steamed shoreward, and when she was within three or four miles of the coast she ran up a large white flag, in token that her task was ended.

This sign that the bombardment had ceased was accepted in good faith, and, as some of the military and naval men had carefully noted that each puff from the repeller was accompanied by a shock, it was considered certain that all the bombs which had been discharged had acted, and that, consequently, no further danger was to be apprehended from them. In spite of this announcement, many of the specta-

tors would not leave their position on the hills, but a hundred or more of curious and courageous men ventured down into the plain.

That part of the sea-coast where Caerdaff had been was a new country, about which men wandered slowly and cautiously, with sudden exclamations of amazement and awe. There were no longer promontories jutting out into the sea, there were no hillocks and rocky terraces rising inland. In a vast plain, shaven and shorn down to a common level of scarred and pallid rock, there lay an immense chasm two and a half miles long, half a mile wide, and so deep that shuddering men could stand and look down upon the rent and riven rocks upon which had rested that portion of the Welsh coast which had now blown out to sea.

An officer of the Royal Engineers stood on the seaward edge of this yawning abyss, then he walked over to the almost circular body of water which occupied the place where the fishing-village had been, and into which the waters of the bay had flowed. When this officer returned to London, he wrote a report to the effect that a ship-canal, less than an eighth of a mile long, leading from the newly formed lake at the head of the bay, would make of this chasm, when filled by the sea, the finest and most thoroughly protected inland basin, for ships of all sizes, on the British coast. But before this report received due official consideration, the idea had been suggested and elaborated in a dozen newspapers.

Accounts and reports of all kinds describing the destruction of Caerdaff, and of the place in which it had stood, filled the newspapers of the world. Photo-

graphs and pictures of Caerdaff as it had been, and as it then was, were produced with marvellous rapidity, and the earthquake bomb of the American War Syndicate was the subject of excited conversation in every civilized country.

The British ministry was now the calmest body of men in Europe. The great opposition storm had died away, the great war storm had ceased, and the wisest British statesmen saw the unmistakable path of national policy lying plain and open before them. There was no longer time for arguments and struggles with opponents or enemies, internal or external. There was even no longer time for the discussion of measures. It was the time for the adoption of a measure which indicated itself, and which did not need discussion.

On the afternoon of the day of the bombardment of Caerdaff, Repeller No. 11, accompanied by her crabs, steamed for the English Channel. Two days afterwards, there lay off the coast at Brighton, with a white flag floating high above her, the old *Tallapoosa*, now naval mistress of the world.

Near by lay a cable-boat, and constant communication, by way of France, was kept up between the officers of the American Syndicate and the repeller. In a very short time, communications were opened between the repeller and London.

When this last step became known to the public of America, almost as much excited by the recent events as the public of England, a great disturbance arose in certain political circles. It was argued that the Syndicate had no right to negotiate in any way with the government of England—that it had been

empowered to carry on a war, and that, if its duties in this regard had been satisfactorily executed, it must now retire, and allow the United States government to attend to its foreign relations.

But the Syndicate was firm. It had contracted to bring the war to a satisfactory conclusion. When it considered that this had been done, it would retire, and allow the American government, with whom the contract had been made, to decide whether or not it had been properly performed.

The unmistakable path of national policy which had shown itself to the wisest British statesmen appeared broader and plainer when the overtures of the American War Syndicate had been received by the British government. The ministry now perceived that the Syndicate had not waged war: it had been simply exhibiting the uselessness of war as at present waged. Who now could deny that it would be folly to oppose the resources of ordinary warfare to those of what might be called prohibitive warfare?

Another idea arose in the minds of the wisest British statesmen. If prohibitive warfare were a good thing for America, it would be an equally good thing for England. More than that, it would be a better thing if only these two countries possessed the power of waging prohibitive warfare.

In three days a convention of peace was concluded between Great Britain and the American Syndicate, acting for the United States, its provisions being made subject to such future treaties and alliances as the governments of the two nations might make with each other. In six days after the affair at Caerdaff, a

committee of the American War Syndicate was in London, making arrangements, under the favorable auspices of the British government, for the formation of an Anglo-American Syndicate of War.

The Atlantic Ocean now sprang into new life. It seemed impossible to imagine whence had come the multitude of vessels which now steamed and sailed upon its surface. Among these, going westward, were six crabs and the spring-armored vessel, once the *Tallapoosa*, going home to a triumphant reception, such as had never before been accorded to any vessel, whether of war or peace.

The blockade of the Canadian port, which had been effectively maintained without incident, was now raised, and the Syndicate's vessels proceeded to an American port.

The British ironclad *Adamant*, at the conclusion of peace, was still in tow of Crab C, and off the coast of Florida. A vessel was sent down the coast by the Syndicate to notify Crab C of what had occurred, and to order it to tow the *Adamant* to the Bermudas, and there to deliver her to the British authorities. The vessel sent by the Syndicate, which was a fast coast steamer, had scarcely hove in sight of the objects of her search when she was saluted by a ten-inch shell from the *Adamant*, followed almost immediately by two others. The commander of the *Adamant* had no idea that the war was at an end, and had never failed, during his involuntary cruise, to fire at anything which bore the American flag, or looked like an American craft.

Fortunately, the coast steamer was not struck, and,

at the top of her speed, retired to a greater distance, whence the Syndicate officer on board communicated with the crab by smoke signals.

During the time in which Crab C had had charge of the *Adamant*, no communication had taken place between the two vessels. Whenever an air-pipe had been elevated for the purpose of using therein a speaking-tube, a volley from a machine-gun on the *Adamant* was poured upon it, and after several pipes had been shot away, the director of the crab ceased his efforts to confer with those on the ironclad. It had been necessary to place the outlets of the ventilating apparatus of the crab under the forward ends of some of the upper roof-plates.

When Crab C had received her orders, she put about the prow of the great war-ship, and proceeded to tow her northeastward, the commander of the *Adamant* taking a parting crack with his heaviest stern gun at the vessel which had brought the order for his release.

All the way from the American coast to the Bermuda Islands, the great *Adamant* blazed, thundered, and roared, not only because her commander saw, or fancied he saw, an American vessel, but to notify all crabs, repellers, and any other vile invention of the enemy that may have been recently put forth to blemish the sacred surface of the sea, that the *Adamant* still floated, with the heaviest coat of mail and the finest and most complete armament in the world, ready to sink anything hostile which came near enough—but not too near.

When the commander found that he was bound for the Bermudas, he did not understand it, unless, those

islands had been captured by the enemy. But he did not stop firing. Indeed, should he find the Bermudas under the American flag, he would fire at that flag, and whatever carried it, as long as a shot or a shell or a charge of powder remained to him.

But when he reached British waters, and, slowly entering St. George's harbor, saw around him the British flag, floating as proudly as it floated above his own great ship, he confessed himself utterly bewildered. But he ordered the men at every gun to stand by their piece until he was boarded by a boat from the fort, and informed of the true state of affairs.

But even then, when weary Crab C raised herself from her fighting depth, and steamed to a dock, the commander of the *Adamant* could scarcely refrain from sending a couple of tons of iron into the beastly sea-devil which had had the impertinence to tow him about against his will.

No time was lost by the respective governments of Great Britain and the United States in ratifying the peace made through the Syndicate, and in concluding a military and naval alliance, the basis of which should be the use by these two nations, and by no other nations, of the Instantaneous Motor. The treaty was made and adopted with much more despatch than generally accompanies such agreements between nations, for both governments felt the importance of placing themselves, without delay, in that position from which, by means of their united control of paramount methods of warfare, they might become the arbiters of peace.

The desire to evolve that power which should render opposition useless had long led men from one

warlike invention to another. Every one who had constructed a new kind of gun, a new kind of armor, or a new explosive, thought that he had solved the problem, or was on his way to do so. The inventor of the Instantaneous Motor had done it.

The treaty provided that all subjects concerning hostilities between either or both of the contracting powers and other nations should be referred to a joint high commission, appointed by the two powers, and, if war should be considered necessary, it should be prosecuted and conducted by the Anglo-American War Syndicate, within limitations prescribed by the high commission.

The contract made with the new Syndicate was of the most stringent order, and contained every provision that ingenuity or foresight of man could invent or suggest to make it impossible for the Syndicate to transfer to any other nation the use of the Instantaneous Motor.

Throughout all classes in sympathy with the administrative parties of Great Britain and the United States there was a feeling of jubilant elation on account of the alliance and the adoption by the two nations of the means of prohibitive warfare. This public sentiment acted even upon the opposition, and the majority of army and navy officers in the two countries felt bound to admit that the arts of war in which they had been educated were things of the past. Of course there were members of the army and navy in both countries who deprecated the new state of things. But there were also men, still living, who deprecated the abolition of the old wooden seventy-four-gun ship.

THE GREAT WAR SYNDICATE

A British artillery officer, conversing with a member of the American Syndicate at a London club, said to him:

"Do you know you made a great mistake in the beginning of your operations with the motor guns? If you had contrived an attachment to the motor which should have made an infernal thunder-clap and a storm of smoke at the moment of discharge, it would have saved you a lot of money and time and trouble. The work of the motor on the Canadian coast was terrible enough, but people could see no connection between that and the guns on your vessels. If you could have sooner shown that connection, you might have saved yourselves the trouble of crossing the Atlantic. And, to prove this, one of the most satisfactory points connected with your work on the Welsh coast was the jet of smoke which came from the repeller every time she discharged a motor. If it had not been for those jets, I believe there would be people now in the opposition who would swear that Caerdaff had been mined, and that the ministry were a party to it."

"Your point is well taken," said the American, "and should it ever be necessary to discharge any more bombs,—which I hope it may not be,—we shall take care to show a visible and audible connection between cause and effect."

"The devil take it, sir!" cried an old captain of an English ship of the line, who was sitting near by. "What you are talking about is not war! We might as well send out a codfish trust to settle national disputes. In the next sea-fight we'll save ourselves the trouble of gnawing and crunching at the

sterns of the enemy. We'll simply send a note aboard, requesting the foreigner to be so good as to send us his rudder by bearer, which, if properly marked and numbered, will be returned to him on the conclusion of peace. This would do just as well as twisting it off, and save expense. No, sir, I will not join you in a julep! *I* have made no alliance over newfangled inventions! Waiter, fetch me some rum and hot water!"

In the midst of the profound satisfaction with which the members of the American War Syndicate regarded the success of their labors,—labors alike profitable to themselves and to the recently contending nations,—and in the gratified pride with which they received the popular and official congratulations which were showered upon them, there was but one little cloud, one regret.

In the course of the great Syndicate War a life had been lost. Thomas Hutchins, while assisting in the loading of coal on one of the repellers, was accidentally killed by the falling of a derrick.

The Syndicate gave a generous sum to the family of the unfortunate man, and throughout the United States the occurrence occasioned a deep feeling of sympathetic regret. A popular subscription was started to build a monument to the memory of Hutchins, and contributions came, not only from all parts of the United States, but from many persons in Great Britain who wished to assist in the erection of this tribute to the man who had fallen in the contest which had been of as much benefit to their country as to his own.

Some weeks after the conclusion of the treaty, a public question was raised, which at first threatened

to annoy the American government, but it proved to be of little moment. An anti-administration paper in Peakville, Arkansas, asserted that in the whole of the published treaty there was not one word in regard to the fisheries question, the complications arising from which had been the cause of the war. Other papers took up the matter, and the government then discovered that, in drawing up the treaty, the fisheries business had been entirely overlooked. There was a good deal of surprise in official circles when this discovery was announced, but, as it was considered that the fisheries question was one which would take care of itself, or be readily disposed of in connection with a number of other minor points which remained to be settled between the two countries, it was decided to take no notice of the implied charge of neglect, and to let the matter drop. And as the opposition party took no real interest in the question, but little more was said about it.

Both countries were too well satisfied with the general result to waste time or discussion over small matters. Great Britain had lost some forts and some ships, but these would have been comparatively useless in the new system of warfare. On the other hand, she had gained, not only the incalculable advantage of the alliance, but a magnificent and unsurpassed landlocked basin on the coast of Wales.

The United States had been obliged to pay an immense sum on account of the contract with the War Syndicate, but this was considered money so well spent, and so much less than an ordinary war would have cost, that only the most violent anti-administration journals ever alluded to it.

Reduction of military and naval forces, and gradual disarmament, was now the policy of the allied nations. Such forces and such vessels as might be demanded for the future operations of the War Syndicate were retained. A few field batteries of motor guns were all that would be needed on land, and a comparatively small number of armored ships would suffice to carry the motor guns that would be required at sea.

Now there would be no more mere exhibitions of the powers of the Instantaneous Motor bomb. Hereafter, if battles must be fought, they would be battles of annihilation.

This is the history of the Great Syndicate War. Whether or not the Anglo-American Syndicate was ever called upon to make war, it is not to be stated here. But certain it is that, after the formation of this Syndicate, all the nations of the world began to teach English in their schools, and the Spirit of Civilization raised her head with a confident smile.

THE STORIES OF THE THREE BURGLARS

THE STORIES OF THE THREE BURGLARS

I AM a householder in a pleasant country neighborhood, about twenty miles from New York. My family consists of myself and wife, our boy, George William, aged two, two maid-servants, and a man; but in the summer we have frequent visitors, and at the time of which I am about to write my Aunt Martha was staying with us.

My house is large and pleasant, and we have neighbors near enough for social purposes and yet not too near or too many to detract from the rural aspect of our surroundings. But we do not live in a Paradise. We are occasionally troubled by mosquitoes and burglars.

Against the first of these annoyances we have always been able to guard ourselves,—at least, in a measure,—and our man and the cook declare they have become so used to them that they do not mind them. But to guard against burglars is much more difficult, and to become used to them would, I think, require a great deal of practice.

For several months before the period of this narrative, our neighborhood had been subject to visits

from burglars. From time to time, houses had been entered and robbed, and the offenders had never been detected.

We had no police force, not even a village organization. There was a small railway station near our house, and six miles away was the county town. For fire and police protection each household was obliged to depend upon itself.

Before the beginning of the burglarious enterprises in our midst, we had not felt the need of much protection in this direction. Sometimes poultry was stolen, but this was a rare occurrence, and, although windows and doors were generally fastened for the night, this labor was often considered much more troublesome than necessary. But now a great change had taken place in the feelings of our community. When the first robbery occurred the neighbors were inclined to laugh about it, and to say that Captain Hubbard's habit of sitting up after the rest of his family had gone to bed, and then retiring and forgetting to close the front door, had invited the entrance of a passing tramp. But when a second and a third house, where windows and doors had not been left open, had been entered and, in a measure, despoiled, people ceased to laugh, and, if there had been any merriment at all on the subject, it would have been caused by the extraordinary and remarkable precautions taken against the entrance of thieves by night. The loaded pistol became the favorite companion of the head of the house. Those who had no watch-dogs, bought them. There were new locks, new bolts, new fastenings. At one time there was a mounted patrol of young men, which, however, was

soon broken up by their mothers. But this trouble was unavailing, for, at intervals, the burglaries continued.

As a matter of course, a great many theories were broached as to the reasons for this disturbance in our hitherto peaceful neighborhood. We were at such a distance from the ordinary centers of crime that it was generally considered that professional burglars would hardly take the trouble to get to us or to get away from us, and that, therefore, the offences were probably committed by unsuspected persons living in this part of the country, who had easy means of determining which houses were worth breaking into, and what method of entrance would be most feasible. In this way some families, hitherto regarded as respectable families, had fallen under suspicion.

So far, mine was the only house of any importance within the distance of a mile from the station which had not, in some way, suffered from burglars. In one or two of these cases the offenders had been frightened away before they had done any other injury than the breaking of a window-shutter, but we had been spared any visitation whatever. After a time we began to consider that this was an invidious distinction. Of course, we did not desire that robbers should break into our house and steal, but it was a sort of implied insult that robbers should think that our house was not worth breaking into. We contrived, however, to bear up under this implied contempt, and even under the facetious imputations of some of our lively neighbors, who declared that it looked very suspicious that we should lose nothing, and even continue to add to our worldly goods, while everybody else was suffering from abstractions.

I did not, however, allow any relaxation in my vigilance in the protection of my house and family. My time to suffer had not yet arrived, and it might not arrive at all, but, if it did come, it should not be my fault. I, therefore, carefully examined all the new precautions my neighbors had taken against the entrance of thieves, and, where I approved of them, I adopted them.

Of some of these my wife and I did not approve. For instance, a tin pan containing iron spoons, the dinner-bell, and a miscellaneous collection of hardware, balanced on the top stair of the staircase, and so connected with fine cords that a thief coming up the stairs would send it rattling and bounding to the bottom, was looked upon by us with great disfavor. The descent of the pan, whether by innocent accident or the approach of a burglar, might throw our little boy into a fit, to say nothing of the terrible fright it would give my Aunt Martha, who was a maiden lady of middle age, and not accustomed to a clatter in the night. A bull-dog in the house my wife would not have, nor, indeed, a dog of any kind. George William was not yet old enough to play with dogs, especially a sharp one—and if the dog were not sharp, it was of no use to have him in the house. To the ordinary burglar-alarm she strongly objected. She had been in houses where these things went off of their own accord, occasioning great consternation, and, besides, she said, if thieves got into the house, she did not want to know it, and she did not want me to know it. The quicker they found what they came for, and went away with it, the better. Of course, she wished them kept out, if such a thing were possible,

but if they did get in, our duty, as parents of the dearest little boy, was non-interference. She insisted, however, that the room in which the loveliest of children slept, and which was also occupied by ourselves, should be made absolutely burglar-proof, and this object, by means of extraordinary bolts and chains, I flattered myself I accomplished. My Aunt Martha had a patent contrivance for fastening a door, that she always used, whether at home or travelling, and in whose merit she placed implicit confidence. Therefore, we did not feel it necessary to be anxious about her. And the servants slept at the top of the house, where thieves would not be likely to go.

"They may continue to slight us by their absence," said my wife, "but I do not believe that they will be able to frighten us by their presence."

I was not, however, so easily contented as my wife. Of course, I wished to do everything possible to protect George William and the rest of the family, but I was also very anxious to protect our property in all parts of the house. Therefore, in addition to everything else I had done, I devised a scheme for interfering with the plans of men who should feloniously break into our home.

After a consultation with a friend, who was a physician greatly interested in the study of narcotic drugs, I procured a mixture which was almost tasteless and without peculiar odor, and of which a small quantity would, in less than a minute, throw an ordinary man into a state of unconsciousness. The potion was, however, no more dangerous in its effects than that quantity of ardent spirits which would cause entire insensibility. After the lapse of several hours, the

person under the influence of the drug would recover consciousness without assistance. But, in order to provide against all contingencies, my friend prepared a powerful antidote, which would almost immediately revive one who had been made unconscious by our potion.

The scheme that I had devised may possibly have been put into use by others, but of this I know not. I thought it a good scheme, and determined to experiment with it, and, if possible, to make a trap which should catch a burglar. I would reveal this plan to no one but my friend the physician and my wife. Secrecy would be an important element in its success.

Our library was a large and pleasant room on the ground floor of the house, and here I set my trap. It was my habit to remain in this room an hour or so after the rest of the family had gone to bed, and, as I was an early riser, I was always in it again before it was necessary for a servant to enter it in the morning.

Before leaving the library for the night, I placed in a conspicuous position in the room a small table, on which was a tray holding two decanters partially filled with wine, in the one red and in the other white. There was also upon the tray an open box of biscuit and three wine-glasses, two of them with a little wine at the bottom. I took pains to make it appear that these refreshments had been recently partaken of. There were biscuit crumbs upon the tray, and a drop or two of wine was freshly spilled upon it every time the trap was set. The table, thus arranged, was left in the room during the night, and early in the morning I put the tray and its contents into a closet and locked it up.

A portion of my narcotic preparation was thoroughly mixed with the contents of each of the decanters, in such proportions that a glass of the wine would be sufficient to produce the desired effect.

It was my opinion that there were few men who, after a night walk and perhaps some labor in forcibly opening a door or a window-shutter, would not cease for a moment in pursuance of their self-imposed task to partake of the refreshments so conveniently left behind them by the occupants of the house when they retired to rest. Should my surmises be correct, I might reasonably expect, should my house be broken into, to find an unconscious burglar in the library when I went down in the morning. And I was sure, and my wife agreed with me, that if I should find a burglar in that room, or in any other part of the house, it was highly desirable that he should be an unconscious one.

Night after night I set my burglar-trap, and morning after morning I locked it up in the closet. I cannot say that I was exactly disappointed that no opportunity offered to test the value of my plan, but it did seem a pity that I should take so much trouble for nothing. It had been some weeks since any burglaries had been committed in the neighborhood, and it was the general opinion that the miscreants had considered this field worked out, and had transferred their labors to a better paying place. The insult of having been considered unworthy the attention of the knights of the midnight jimmy remained with us, but as all our goods and chattels also remained with us, we could afford to brook the indignity.

As the trap cost nothing my, wife did not object to

my setting it every night, for the present. Something might happen, she remarked, and it was just as well to be prepared in more ways than one. But there was a point upon which she was very positive.

"When George William is old enough to go about the house by himself," she said, "those decanters must not be left exposed upon the table. Of course, I do not expect him to go about the house drinking wine and everything that he finds, but there is no knowing what a child, in the first moments of his investigative existence, may do."

For myself, I became somewhat tired of acting my part in this little farce every night and morning, but when I have undertaken anything of this sort, I am slow to drop it.

It was about three weeks since I had begun to set my trap when I was awakened in the night by a sudden noise. I sat up in bed, and, as I did so, my wife said to me sleepily: "What is that? Was it thunder? There it is again!" she exclaimed, starting up. "What a crash! It must have struck somewhere."

I did not answer. It was not thunder. It was something in the house. And it flashed into my mind that perhaps my trap had been sprung. I got out of bed and began rapidly to dress.

"What are you going to do?" anxiously asked my wife.

"I'm going to see what has happened," said I.

At that moment there was another noise. This was like two or three heavy footsteps, followed by a sudden thump, but it was not so loud as the others.

"John," cried my wife, "don't stir an inch! It's

burglars!" And she sprang out of bed and seized me by the arm.

"I must go down," I said. "But there is really no reason for your being frightened. I shall call David, and shall carry my pistol, so there is really no danger. If there are thieves in the house, they have probably decamped by this time—that is, if they are able to do so, for of course they must know that that noise would awaken the soundest sleepers."

My wife looked at me, and then slowly withdrew her hands from my arm.

"Promise me," she said, "if you find a burglar down-stairs in the possession of his senses, you will immediately come back to me and George William."

I promised her, and, putting on my coat, I went out into the second-story hall. I carried no light Before I had reached the bottom of the back stairs, I heard David, my man, coming down. To be sure it was he, and not a burglar, I spoke to him in a low voice, my pistol raised in case of an unsatisfactory reply.

"I heard that noise, sir," he whispered, "and was going down to see about it."

"Are you ready, if it's thieves?" I whispered.

"I have got the biscuit-beater," he replied.

"Come on, then," said I, and we went down-stairs.

I had left no light in the library, but there was one there now, and it shone through the open door into the hallway. We stopped and listened. There was no sound, and, slowly and cautiously, we appoached the door of the library. The scene I beheld astounded me, and involuntarily I sprang back a step or two. So did David. But in an instant we saw that

there was no need of retreat or defence. Stretched upon the floor, not far from the doorway, lay a tall man, his face upturned to the light of a bull's-eye lantern which stood by the mantelpiece. His eyes were shut, and it was evident that he was perfectly insensible. Near by, in the wreck of the small table, glasses, and decanters, lay another man, apparently of heavier build. He also was as still as a corpse. A little farther back, half sitting on the floor, with the upper part of his body resting against the lounge, was another man, with a black mask over his face.

"Are they dead?" exclaimed David, in an undertone of horror.

"No," said I, "they are not dead; they have been caught in my trap."

And I must admit that the consciousness of this created a proud exultation of spirit within me. I had overmatched these rascals—they were prostrated before me. If one of them moved, David and I could kill him. But I did not believe there would be any killing, nor any moving, for the present.

In a high whisper, which could have been heard distinctly all over the house, my wife now called to me from the top of the stairs. "What is it?"she said. "What has happened?"

I stepped quickly to the stairway.

"Everything is all right," I said in a loud, distinct voice, intended to assure my wife that there was no necessity for caution or alarm. "I will be with you presently."

"I am glad to hear that nothing is the matter," said Aunt Martha, now for the first time opening her door. "I was afraid something had happened."

But I had business to attend to before I could go up-stairs. In thinking over and arranging this plan for the capture of burglars, I had carefully considered its various processes, and had provided against all the contingencies I could think of; therefore, I was not now obliged to deliberate what I should do. "Keep your eye on them," said I to David, "and if one of them moves, be ready for him. The first thing to do is to tie them, hand and foot."

I quickly lighted a lamp, and then took from a shelf of the closet a large coil of strong cotton rope, which I had provided for such an occasion as the present.

"Now," said I to David, "I will tie them, while you stand by to knock over any one of them who attempts to get up."

The instrument with which David was prepared to carry out my orders was a formidable one. In the days of my youth my family was very fond of "Maryland biscuit," which owes much of its delicacy to the fact that before baking it is pounded and beaten by a piece of heavy iron. Some people used one kind of a beater, and some another, but we had had made for the purpose a heavy iron club a little over a foot long, large and heavy at one end, with a handle at the other. In my present household Maryland biscuits were never made, but I had preserved this iron beater as a memento of my boyhood, and when the burglaries began in our vicinity, I gave it to David to keep in his room, to be used as a weapon, if necessary. I did not allow him to have a pistol, having a regard for my own safety in a sudden night alarm, and nothing could be more formidable in a hand-to-hand encounter than this skull-crushing club.

I began with the tall man, and rapidly tied his feet together, with many twists of the rope and as many knots. I then turned him over, and tied his elbows behind him in the same secure way. I had given so much thought to the best method of securing a man by cords, that I do not think this fellow could possibly have released himself when I had finished with him.

David was obeying my orders, and keeping a strict watch on the prostrate men, but his emotions of amazement were so great that he could not keep them down.

"What is the matter with them, sir?" he said. "How did they come so?"

"There is no time for talking now," I answered. "I will tell you all about it when the men have been secured."

I now turned my attention to the man who was partly resting against the lounge. I first tied his feet, and before letting him down to the floor, so as to get to his arms, I removed his hat and his mask, which was made of black muslin. I was surprised to see the beardless face of a young and very good-looking man. He was well dressed, and had the general appearance of a person belonging to theatrical circles. When his arms had been tied, I told David he might lay down his biscuit-beater, and help me with the third man, who was badly mixed up with the débris of the refreshments. We hauled him out and tied him up. He was rather a short man, and very heavy, but I could see no signs of his having been hurt by the smash-up he made in falling.

We now proceeded to search the insensible burglars

for arms. Upon the tall man we found a large revolver, a heavy billy, which looked as if it had seen service, and a long-bladed knife. The stout man carried two double-barrelled pistols, and, upon one of the fingers of his right hand, wore a brass ring with a murderous-looking iron protuberance upon it, which, when driven forward by his powerful arm, was probably more dangerous than a billy. Upon the younger man we found no arms at all, and his hip pocket contained nothing but a small handbook on civil engineering.

I now briefly explained to David the nature of the trap which had caught the burglars. He gazed upon me with a face glowing with amazed admiration.

"What a head you've got, sir!" he exclaimed. "I don't believe there is another man in this State who would have thought of that. And what are you going to do with 'em now, sir? Hang 'em? That's what ought to be done with 'em, the hounds!"

"All I shall do," I answered, "will be to keep them till daylight, and then I shall send word to the sheriff at Kennertown, and have him send officers for them."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed David, "they are in the worst kind of a box."

Now my wife called me again. "What in the world are you doing down there?" she called. "Why don't you come up-stairs?"

This annoyed me, for I was not yet ready to go up-stairs. I wished to resuscitate these fellows, for their stupor was so profound I began to fear that perhaps they had taken too much of the drug, and ought to be brought to their senses as speedily as possible. This feeling was due more to my desire that

serious injuries should not occur to the rascals while in my house than to any concern for them.

"My dear," said I, stepping to the bottom of the stairs, "I have some things to attend to down here which will occupy me a few minutes longer, then I will come up to you."

"I can't imagine what the things are," she said, "but I suppose I can wait," and she went into her room and closed the door after her.

I now began to consider what was to be done with the burglars after they had been resuscitated. My first impulse was to rid the house of them by carrying them out of doors and bringing them to their senses there. But there was an objection to this plan. They would be pretty heavy fellows to carry, and it would be absolutely necessary to watch them until they could be given into the charge of the officers of the law. I did not want to stay out of doors to do this, for the night air was raw and chilly, and therefore, I, determined to keep them in the house. As they could be resuscitated better in a sitting position, they must be set up, in some way or other. I consulted David on the subject.

"You might put 'em up with their backs ag'in' the wall, sir," said he, "but the dirty beasts would spoil the paper. I wouldn't keep 'em in a decent room like this. I'd haul 'em out into the kitchen, anyway."

But as they were already in the library, I decided to let them stay, and to get them as speedily as possible into some position in which they might remain. I bethought me of a heavy wooden settle, or bench with back and arms, which stood on the side

piazza. With David's help, I brought this into the room, and placed it with its back to the window.

"Now, then," said I to David, "we will put them on this bench, and I will tie them fast to it. We cannot be too careful in securing them, for if one of them were to get loose, even without arms, there is no knowing what trouble he might make."

"Well, sir," said David, "if I'm to handle 'em at all, I'd rather have 'em dead, as I hope they are, than have 'em alive. But you needn't be afraid, sir, that any one of 'em will get loose. If I see any signs of that, I'll crack the rascal's skull in a jiffy."

It required a great deal of tugging and lifting to get those three men on the bench, but we got them there, side by side, their heads hanging listlessly, in one way, or another. I then tied each one of them firmly to the bench.

I had scarcely finished this when I again heard my wife's voice from the top of the stairs.

"If any pipes have burst," she called down, "tell David not to catch the water in the new milk-pans."

"Very well," I replied, "I'll see to it," and was rejoiced to hear again the shutting of the bedroom door.

I now saturated a sponge with the powerful preparation which Dr. Marks had prepared as an antidote, and held it under the nose of the tall burglar. In less than twenty seconds there was a slight quivering in his face, as if he were about to sneeze, and very soon he did sneeze slightly. Then he sneezed violently, raised his head, and opened his eyes. For a moment he gazed blankly before him, and then looked stupidly at David and at me. But in an instant there flashed into his face the look of a wild beast. His

quick, glittering eye took in the whole situation at a glance. With a furious oath, he threw himself forward with such a powerful movement that he nearly lifted the bench.

"Stop that," said David, who stood near him with his iron club uplifted. "If you do that again I'll let you feel this."

The man looked at him with a fiery flash in his eyes, and then he looked at me, as I stood holding the muzzle of my pistol within two feet of his face. The black and red faded out of his countenance. He became pale. He glanced at his companions, bound and helpless. His expression now changed entirely. The fury of the wild beast was succeeded by a look of frightened subjection. Gazing very anxiously at my pistol, he said, in a voice which, though agitated, was low and respectful:

"What does this mean? What are you going to do? Will you please turn away the muzzle of that pistol?"

I took no notice of this indication of my steadiness of hand, and answered:

"I am going to bring these other scoundrels to their senses, and early in the morning the three of you will be on your way to jail, where I hope you may remain for the rest of your lives."

"If you don't get killed on your way there," said David, in whose nervous hand the heavy biscuit-beater was almost as dangerous as my pistol.

The stout man, who sat in the middle of the bench, was twice as long in reviving as had been his companion, who watched the operation with intense interest. When the burly scoundrel finally became

conscious, he sat for a few minutes gazing at the floor with a silly grin, then he raised his head and looked first at one of his companions and then at the other, gazed for an instant at me and David, tried to move his feet, gave a pull at one arm and then at the other, and when he found he was bound hard and fast, his face turned as red as fire, and he opened his mouth, whether to swear or yell I know not. I had already closed the door, and before the man had uttered more than a premonitory sound, David had clapped the end of his bludgeon against his mouth.

"Taste that," he said, "and you know what you will get if you disturb this family with any of your vile cursin' and swearin'."

"Look here," said the tall man, suddenly turning to the other with an air of authority, "keep your mouth shut and don't speak till you're spoken to. Mind that, now, or these gentlemen will make it the worse for you."

David grinned as he took away his club.

"I'd gentlemen you," he said, "if I could get half a chance to do it."

The face of the heavy burglar maintained its redness, but he kept his mouth shut.

When the younger man was restored to his senses, his full consciousness and power of perception seemed to come to him in an instant. His eyes flashed from right to left, he turned deadly white, and then, merely moving his arms and legs enough to make himself aware that he was bound, he sat perfectly still, and said not a word.

I now felt that I must go and acquaint my wife with what had happened, or otherwise she would be

coming down-stairs to see what was keeping me so long. David declared that he was perfectly able to keep guard over them, and I ran up-stairs. David afterwards told me that, as soon as I left the room, the tall burglar endeavored to bribe him to cut their ropes, and told him, if he were afraid to stay behind after doing this, he would get him a much better situation than this could possibly be. But as David threatened personal injury to the speaker if he uttered another word of the kind, the tall man said no more. But the stout man became very violent and angry, threatening all sorts of vengeance on my unfortunate man. David said he was beginning to get angry, when the tall man, who seemed to have much influence over the other fellow, ordered him to keep quiet, as the gentleman with the iron club no doubt thought he was doing right. The young fellow said never a word.

When I told my wife that I had caught three burglars, and that they were bound fast in the library, she nearly fainted, and when I had revived her, she begged me to promise that I would not go down-stairs again until the police had carried away the horrible wretches. But I assured her that it was absolutely necessary for me to return to the library. She then declared that she would go with me, and, if anything happened, she would share my fate. "Besides," she said, "if they are tied fast, so they can't move, I should like to see what they look like. I never saw a burglar."

I did not wish my wife to go down-stairs, but as I knew there would be no use in objecting, I consented. She hastily dressed herself, making me wait for her,

and, when she left the room, she locked the door on the sleeping George William, in order that no one should get at him during her absence. As we passed the head of the stairs, the door of my Aunt Martha's room opened, and there she stood, completely dressed, with her bonnet on, and a little leather bag in her hand.

"I heard so much talking, and so much going up and down stairs, that I thought I would better be ready to do whatever had to be done. Is it fire?"

"No," said my wife. "It's three burglars, tied in a bunch in the library. I am going down to see them."

My Aunt Martha gasped, and looked as if she were going to sit down on the floor.

"Goodness gracious!" she said. "If you're going, I'll go, too. I can't let you go alone, and I never did see a burglar."

I hurried down, and left the two ladies on the stairs until I was sure everything was still safe, and when I saw that there had been no change in the state of affairs, I told them to come down.

When my wife and Aunt Martha timidly looked in at the library door, the effect upon them and upon the burglars was equally interesting. The ladies each gave a start and a little scream, and huddled themselves close to me, and the three burglars gazed at them with faces that expressed more astonishment than any I had ever seen before. The stout fellow gave vent to a smothered exclamation, and the face of the young man flushed, but not one of them spoke.

"Are you sure they are tied fast?" whispered my Aunt Martha to me.

"Perfectly," I answered. "If I had not been sure, I should not have allowed you to come down."

Thereupon the ladies picked up courage and stepped farther into the room.

"Did you and David catch them?" asked my aunt. "And how in the world did you do it?"

"I'll tell you all about that another time," I said, "and you would better go up-stairs as soon as you have seen what sort of people are these cowardly burglars, who sneak or break into the houses of respectable people at night, and rob and steal and ruin other people's property with no more conscience or human feeling than is possessed by the rats which steal your corn, or the polecats which kill your chickens."

"I can scarcely believe," said Aunt Martha, "that that young man is a real burglar."

At these words the eyes of the fellow spoken of glowed as he fixed them on Aunt Martha, but he did not say a word, and the paleness which had returned to his face did not change.

"Have they told you who they are?" asked my wife.

"I haven't asked them," I said. "And now, don't you think you would better go up-stairs?"

"It seems to me," said Aunt Martha, "that those ropes must hurt them."

The tall man now spoke. "Indeed, they do, madam," he said, in a low voice and very respectful manner. "They are very tight."

I told David to look at all the cords and see if any of them were too tightly drawn.

"It's all nonsense, sir," said he, when he had finished the examination. "Not one of the ropes is a bit

too tight. All they want is a chance to pull out their ugly hands."

"Of course," said Aunt Martha, "if it would be unsafe to loosen the knots, I wouldn't do it. Are they to be sent to prison?"

"Yes," said I. "As soon as the day breaks, I shall send down for the police."

I now heard a slight sound at the door, and, turning, saw Alice, our maid of the house, peeping in at the door. Alice was a modest girl, and quite pretty.

"I heard the noise and the talking, sir," she said, "and when I found the ladies had gone down to see what it was, I thought I would come, too."

"And where is the cook?" asked my wife. "Doesn't she want to see burglars?"

"Not a bit of it," answered Alice, very emphatically. "As soon as I told her what it was, she covered up her head with the bedclothes, and declared, ma'am, that she would never get up until they were entirely gone out of the house."

At this the stout man grinned.

"I wish you'd all covered up your heads," he said.

The tall man looked at him severely, and he said no more.

David did not move from his post near the three burglars, but he turned toward Alice and looked at her. We knew that he had tender feelings toward the girl, and I think he did not approve of her being there.

"Have they stolen anything?" asked Aunt Martha.

"They have not had any chance to take anything away," I said. And my wife remarked that, whether

they had stolen anything or not, they had made a dreadful mess on the floor, and had broken the table. They certainly should be punished.

At this, she made a motion as if she would leave the room, and an anxious expression immediately came on the face of the tall man, who had evidently been revolving something in his mind.

"Madam," he said, "we are very sorry we have broken your table, and that we have damaged some of your glass and your carpet. I assure you, however, that nothing of the kind would have happened but for that drugged wine, which was doubtless intended for a medicine, and not a beverage. But, weary and chilled as we were when we arrived, madam, we were glad to partake of it, supposing it ordinary wine."

I could not help showing a little pride at the success of my scheme.

"The refreshment was intended for fellows of your class, and I am very glad you accepted it."

The tall man did not answer me, but he again addressed my wife.

"Madam," he said, "if you ladies would remain and listen to me a few moments, I am sure I would make you aware that there is much to extenuate the apparent offence I have committed to-night."

My wife did not answer him, but, turning to me, said, smiling, "If he alludes to their drinking your wine, he need not apologize."

The man looked at her with an expression as if her words had pained him.

"Madam," he said, "if you would consent to listen to my explanations and the story of this affair, I am sure your feelings toward me would not be so harsh."

"Now, then," said my Aunt Martha, "if he has a story to tell, he ought to be allowed to tell it, even in a case like this. Nobody should be judged until he has said what he thinks he ought to say. Let us hear his story."

I laughed. "Any statement he may make," I said, "will probably deserve a much stronger name than a story."

"I think that what you say is true," remarked my wife, "but still, if he has a story to tell, I should like to hear it."

I think I heard David give a little grunt, but he was too well bred to say anything.

"Very well," said I. "If you choose to sit up and hear him talk, it is your affair. I shall be obliged to remain here anyway, and will not object to anything that will help to pass away the time. But these men must not be the only ones who are seated. David, you and Alice can clear away that broken table and the rest of the stuff, and then we might as well sit down and make ourselves comfortable."

Alice, with cloth and brush, approached very timidly the scene of the disaster. But the young burglar, who was nearest to her, gazed upon her with such a gentle and quiet air that she did not seem to be frightened. When she and David had put the room in fair order, I placed two easy-chairs for my wife and Aunt Martha at a moderate distance from the burglars, and took another myself, a little nearer to them, and then told David to seat himself near the other end of the bench, and Alice took a chair at a little distance from the ladies.

"Now, then," said Aunt Martha to the burglars, "I

would like very much to hear what any one of you can say in extenuation of having broken into a gentleman's house by night."

Without hesitation, the tall man began his speech. He had a long and rather lean, close-shaven face, which at present bore the expression of an undertaker conducting a funeral. Although it was my aunt who had shown the greatest desire to hear his story, he addressed himself to my wife. I think he imagined that she was the more influential person of the two.

"Madam," said he, "I am glad of the opportunity of giving you and your family an idea of the difficulties and miseries which beset a large class of your fellow-beings, of whom you seldom have a chance of knowing anything at all, but of whom you hear all sorts of the most misleading accounts. Now, I am a poor man. I have suffered the greatest miseries that poverty can inflict. I am here, suspected of having committed a crime. It is possible I may be put to considerable difficulty and expense in proving my innocence."

"I shouldn't wonder," I interrupted.

To this remark he paid no attention.

"Considering all this," he continued, "you may not suppose, madam, that, as a boy, I was brought up most respectably and properly. My mother was a religious woman, and my father was a boat-builder. I was sent to school, and my mother has often told me I was a good scholar. But she died when I was about sixteen, and I am sure, had this not happened, I should never have been even suspected of breaking the laws of my country. Not long after her death, my father

appeared to lose interest in his business, and took to rowing about the river, instead of building boats for other people to row. Very often he went out at night, and I used to wonder why he should care to be on the water in the darkness, and sometimes in the rain. One evening, at supper, he said to me: 'Thomas, you ought to know how to row in the dark as well as in the daytime. I am going up the river to-night, and you can come with me.'

"It was about my ordinary bedtime when we took a boat with two pair of oars, and pulled up the river about three miles above the city."

"What city?" I asked.

"The city where I was born, sir," he said, "and the name of which I must be excused from mentioning, for reasons connected with my only surviving parent. There were houses on the river-bank, but they were not very near each other. Some of them had lights in them, but most of them were dark, as it must have been after eleven o'clock. Before one of them my father stopped rowing for a moment, and looked at it pretty hard. It seemed to be all dark, but, as we pulled on a little, I saw a light in the back of the house.

"My father said nothing, but we kept on, though pulling very easy for a mile or two, and then we turned and floated down with the tide. 'You might as well rest, Thomas,' said he, 'for you have worked pretty hard.'

"We floated slowly, for the tide was just beginning to turn, and when we got near the house which I mentioned, I noticed that there was no light in it. When we were about opposite to it, father suddenly looked

up and said, not speaking very loud, 'By George! if that isn't Williamson Green's house. I wasn't thinking of it when we rowed up, and passed it without taking notice of it. I am sorry for that, for I wanted to see Williamson, and now I expect he has gone to bed.'

"'Who is Mr. Green?' I asked.

"'He is an old friend of mine,' said my father, 'and I haven't seen him for some little while now. About four months ago he borrowed of me a sextant, quadrant, and chronometer. They were instruments I took from old Captain Barney, in payment of some work I did for him. I wasn't using them, and Williamson had bought a cat-boat and was studying navigation. But he has given up that fad now, and has promised me, over and over, to send me back my instruments. But he has never done it. If I had thought of it, I would have stopped and got them of him, but I didn't think, and now I expect he has gone to bed. However, I'll row inshore and see. Perhaps he's up yet.'

"You see, ma'am," said the speaker to my wife, "I am telling you all these particulars because I am very anxious you should understand exactly how everything happened on this night, which was the turning-point of my life."

"Very good," said Aunt Martha. "We want to hear all the particulars."

"Well, then," continued the burglar, "we pulled up to a stone wall which was at the bottom of Green's place, and made fast, and father got out and went up to the house. After a good while, he came back and said he was pretty sure William-

son Green had gone to bed, and as it wouldn't do to waken people up from their sleep to ask them for nautical instruments they had borrowed, he sat down for a minute on the top of the wall, and then he slapped his knee—not making much noise, though.

"'By George!' he said, 'an idea has just struck me. I can play the prettiest trick on Williamson that ever was played on mortal man. Those instruments are all in a box, locked up, and I know just where he keeps it. I saw it not long ago, when I went to his house to talk about a yacht he wants built. It is on a table in the corner of his bedroom. He was taking me through the house to show me the improvements he had made, and he said to me: "Martin, there's your instruments. I won't trouble you to take them with you, because they are heavy, and you are not going straight home. But I'll bring them to you day after to-morrow, when I shall be going your way."

"'Now, then,' said my father, 'the trick I am thinking of playing on Williamson is this: I would like to take that box of instruments out of his room without his knowing it, and carry them home, having the boat here convenient, and then, in a day or two, to write to him and tell him I must have them, because I have a special use for them. Of course he'll be awfully cut up, not having them to send back, and when he comes down to my place to talk about it, and after hearing all he has to say, I'll show him the box. He'll be the most dumfoundedest man in this State, and, if I don't choose to tell him, he will never know, to his dying day, how I got that box. And if he lies awake at night, trying to think how I got it, it will serve him right for keeping my property from me so long.'

"'But, father,' said I, 'if the people have gone to bed, you can't get into the house to play him your trick.'

"'That can be managed,' said he. 'I'm rather old for climbing, myself, but I know a way by which you, Thomas, can get in easy enough. At the back of the house is a trellis with a grape-vine running over it, and the top of it is just under one of the second-story windows. You can climb up that trellis, Thomas, and lift up that window-sash very carefully, so as not to make any noise, and get in. Then you'll be in a back room, with a door right in front of you which opens into Mr. and Mrs. Green's bedroom. There's always a little night-lamp burning in it, by which you can see to get about. In the corner, on your right as you go into the room, is a table with my instrument-box standing on it. The box is pretty heavy, and there is a handle on top to carry it by. You need not be afraid to go in, for, by this time, they are both sound asleep, and you can pick up the box and walk out as gingerly as a cat, having, of course, taken your shoes off before you went in. Then you can hand the box out the back window to me,—I can climb up high enough to reach it,—and you can scuttle down, and we'll be off, having the best rig on Williamson Green that I ever heard of in my born days.'

"I was a very active boy, used to climbing and all that sort of thing, and I had no doubt that I could easily get into the house, but I did not fancy my father's scheme.

"'Suppose,' I said, 'that Mr. Williamson Green should wake up and see me, what could I say? How could I explain my situation?'

"'You needn't say anything,' said my father. 'If

he wakes up, blow out the light and scoot. If you happen to have the box in your hand, drop it out the back window, and then slip down after it. He won't see us, but, if he does, he cannot catch us before we get to the boat; but if he should, I will have to explain the matter to him, and the joke will be against me. But I shall get my instruments, which is the main point, after all.'

"I did not argue with my father, for he was a man who hated to be differed with, and I agreed to help him carry out his little joke. We took off our shoes and walked quietly to the back of the house. My father stood below, and I climbed up the trellis under the back window which he pointed out. The window-sash was down, all but a little crack to let in air, and I raised it so slowly and gently that I made no noise. Then, without any trouble at all, I got into the room.

"I found myself in a moderate-sized chamber, into which a faint light came from a door opposite the window. Having been several hours out in the night, my eyes had become so accustomed to darkness that this light was comparatively strong, and I could see everything.

"Looking about me, my eyes fell on a little bedstead, on which lay one of the most beautiful infants I ever beheld in my life. Its golden hair lay in ringlets upon the pillow. Its eyes were closed, but its soft cheeks had in them a rosy tinge which almost equalled the color of its dainty little lips, slightly opened as it softly breathed and dreamed."

At this point I saw my wife look quickly at the bedroom key she had in her hand. I knew she was thinking of George William.

"I stood entranced," continued the burglar, "gazing upon this babe, for I was very fond of children. But I remembered that I must not waste time, and stepped softly into the next room. There I beheld Mr. and Mrs. Williamson Green in bed, both fast asleep, the gentleman breathing a little hard. In a corner, just where my father told me I should find it, stood the box upon the table.

"But I could not immediately pick it up and depart. The beautiful room in which I found myself was a revelation to me. Until that moment, I had not known that I had tastes and sympathies of a higher order than might have been expected of the youthful son of a boat-builder. Those artistic furnishings aroused within me a love of the beautiful which I did not know I possessed. The carpets, the walls, the pictures, the hangings in the windows, the furniture, the ornaments,—everything, in fact,—impressed me with such a delight that I did not wish to move or go away.

"Into my young soul there came a longing. 'Oh,' I said to myself, 'that my parents had belonged to the same social grade as that worthy couple reposing in that bed! and oh, that I, in my infancy, had been as beautiful and as likely to be so carefully nurtured and cultured as that sweet babe in the next room!' I almost heaved a sigh as I thought of the difference between these surroundings and my own. But I checked myself. It would not do to make a noise and spoil my father's joke.

"There were a great many things in that luxurious apartment which it would have delighted me to look upon and examine, but I forbore."

"I wish I'd been there," said the stout man. "There wouldn't have been any forbearin'."

The speaker turned sharply upon him.

"Don't you interrupt me again," he said angrily.

Then, instantly resuming his deferential tone, he continued his story:

"But I had come there by the command of my parent, and this command must be obeyed, without trifling or loss of time. My father did not approve of trifling or loss of time. I moved quietly toward the table in the corner, on which stood my father's box. I was just about to put my hand upon it when I heard a slight movement behind me. I gave a start and glanced backward. It was Mr. Williamson Green turning over in his bed. What if he should awake? His back was now toward me, and my impulse was to fly, and leave everything behind me. But my father had ordered me to bring the box, and he expected his orders to be obeyed. I had often been convinced of that.

"I stood perfectly motionless for a minute or so, and when the gentleman recommenced his regular and very audible breathing, I felt it safe to proceed with my task. Taking hold of the box, I found it was much heavier than I had expected it to be, but I moved gently away with it, and passed into the back room.

"There I could not refrain from stopping a moment by the side of the sleeping babe, upon whose cherub-like face the light of the night-lamp dimly shone. The little child was still sleeping sweetly, and my impulse was to stop and kiss it. But I knew this would be wrong. The infant might awake and utter

a cry, and my father's would joke be spoiled. I moved to the open window, and with some trouble, but, I think, without any noise, I succeeded in getting out upon the trellis with the box under my arm. The descent was awkward, but my father was a tall man, and, reaching upward, he relieved me of my burden before I got to the ground.

"'I didn't remember it was so heavy,' he whispered, 'or I should have given you a rope to lower it down by. If you had dropped it, and spoiled my instruments, and made a lot of noise besides, I should have been angry enough.'

"I was very glad my father was not angry, and, following him over the greensward, we quickly reached the boat, where the box was stowed away under the bow to keep it from injury.

"We pushed off as quietly as possible, and rowed swiftly down the river. When we had gone about a mile, I suddenly dropped my oar, with an exclamation of dismay.

"'What's the matter?' cried my father.

"'Oh, I have done a dreadful thing!' I said. 'Oh, father, I must go back!'

"I am sorry to say that at this my father swore.

"'What do you want to go back for?' he said.

"'Just to think of it! I left open the window of the room in which that beautiful child was sleeping! If it should take cold and die from the damp air of the river blowing upon it, I should never forgive myself. Oh, if I had only thought of climbing up the trellis again and pulling down that sash! I am sure I could go back and do it without making the least noise.' My father gave a grunt, but what the grunt meant I

do not know, and for a few moments he was silent, and then he said:

"'Thomas, you cannot go back. The distance is too great, the tide is against us, and it is time that you and I were both in our beds. Nothing may happen to that baby, but attend to my words now: If any harm should come to that child, it would go hard with you. If it should die, it would be of no use for you to talk about practical jokes. You would be held responsible for its death. I was going to say to you that it might be as well for you not to say anything about this little venture until I had seen how Williamson Green took the joke. Some people get angry with very little reason, although I hardly believe he's that sort of a man. But now things are different. He thinks all the world of that child, which is the only one they've got, and if you want to stay outside of jail or the house of refuge, I warn you never to say a word of where you have been this night.'

"With this he began to row again, and I followed his example, but with a very heavy heart. All that night I dreamed of the little child with the damp night winds blowing in upon it."

"Did you ever hear if it caught cold?" asked Aunt Martha.

"No," replied the burglar, "I never did. I mentioned the matter to my father, and he said he had great fears upon the subject, for, although he had written to Williamson Green, asking him to return the instruments, he had not seen him or heard from him, and he was afraid that the child had died or was dangerously sick. Shortly after that, my father sent me on a little trip to the Long Island coast, to collect

some bills from people for whom he had done work. He gave me money to stay a week or two at the seashore, saying that the change would do me good. And it was while I was away on this delightful holiday that an event occurred which had a most disastrous effect upon my future life. My father was arrested for burglary!

"It appeared—and I cannot tell you how shocked I was when I discovered the truth—that the box I had carried away did not contain nautical instruments, but was filled with valuable plate and jewels. My unfortunate father heard from a man who had been discharged from the service of the family whose house he had visited—whose name, by the way, was not Green—where the box containing the valuables mentioned was always placed at night, and he had also received accurate information in regard to the situation of the rooms and the best method of gaining access to them.

"I believe that some arrangement had been made between my father and this discharged servant in regard to a division of the contents of the box, and it was on account of a disagreement on this subject that the man became very angry, and after pocketing what my father thought was his fair share, he departed to unknown regions, leaving behind a note to the police which led to my father's arrest."

"That was a mean trick," said Aunt Martha.

The burglar looked at her gratefully.

"In the lower spheres of life, madam, such things often happen. Some of the plate and jewels were

found in my father's possession, and he was speedily tried, and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. And now, can you imagine, ladies," said the tall burglar, apparently having become satisfied to address himself to Aunt Martha as well as to my wife, "the wretched position in which I found myself? I was upbraided as the son of a thief. I soon found myself without home, without occupation, and, alas! without good reputation. I was careful not to mention my voluntary connection with my father's crime, for fear that, should I do so, I might be compelled to make a statement which might increase the severity of his punishment. For this reason, I did not dare to make inquiries concerning the child in whom I had taken such an interest, and whose little life I had, perhaps, imperilled. I never knew, ladies, whether that infant grew up, or not.

"But I, alas! grew up to a life of hardship and degradation. It would be impossible for persons in your sphere of life to understand what I now was obliged to suffer. Suitable employment I could not obtain, because I was the son of a burglar. With a father in the State prison, it was of no use for me to apply for employment at any respectable place of business. I labored at one thing and another, sometimes engaging in the most menial employments. I had been educated and brought up by my dear mother for a very different career. Sometimes I managed to live fairly well, sometimes I suffered. Always I suffered from the stigma of my father's crime. Always, in the eyes of the community in which I lived,—a community, I am sorry to say, incapable,

as a rule, of making correct judgments in delicate cases like this,—I was looked upon as belonging to the ranks of the dishonest. It was a hard lot, and sometimes almost impossible to bear up under.

"I have spoken at length, ladies, in order that you may understand my true position, and I wish to say that I have never felt the crushing weight of my father's disgrace more deeply than I felt it last evening. This man," nodding toward the stout burglar, "came to me shortly after I had eaten my supper, which happened to be a frugal one, and said to me:

"'Thomas, I have some business to attend to to-night, in which you can help me, if you choose. I know you are a good mechanic.'

"'If it is work that will pay me,' I answered, 'I should be very glad to do it, for I am greatly in need of money.'

"'It will pay,' said he, and I agreed to assist him.

"As we were walking to the station, as the business to be attended to was out of town, this man, whose name is James Barlow, talked to me in such a way that I began to suspect he intended to commit a burglary, and openly charged him with this evil purpose.

"'You may call it burglary, or anything else you please,' said he. 'Property is very unequally divided in this world, and it is my business in life to make wrong things right, as far as I can. I am going to the house of a man who has a great deal more than he needs, and I haven't anything like as much as I need, and so I intend to take some of his overplus—not very much, for when I leave his house he will still be

a rich man, and I'll be a poor one. But, for a time, my family will not starve.'

"'Argue as you please, James Barlow,' I said, 'what you are going to do is nothing less than burglary.'

"'Of course it is,' said he, 'but it's all right, all the same. There are a lot of people, Thomas, who are not as particular about these things as they used to be, and there is no use for you to seem better than your friends and acquaintances. Now, to show that there are not so many bigots as there used to be, there's a young man going to meet us at the station who is greatly interested in the study of social problems. He is going along with us just to look into this sort of thing and study it. It is impossible for him to understand people of our class, or to do anything to make their condition better, if he does not thoroughly investigate their methods of life and action. He's going along just as a student, nothing more, and he may be down on the whole thing, for all I know. He pays me five dollars for the privilege of accompanying me, and whether he likes it, or not, is his business. I want you to go along as a mechanic, and if your conscience won't let you take any share in the profit, I'll just pay you for your time.'

"'James Barlow,' said I, 'I am going with you, but for a purpose far different from that you desire. I shall keep by your side, and if I can dissuade you from committing the crime you intend, I shall do so. But if I fail in this, and you deliberately break into a house for purposes of robbery, I shall arouse the inmates and frustrate your crime.' Now, James Barlow," said he, turning to the stout man with a severe expression on his strongly marked face, "is not what

I have said perfectly true? Did you not say to me every word which I have just repeated?"

The stout man looked at the other in a very odd way. His face seemed to broaden and redden, and he merely closed his eyes as he promptly answered:

"That's just what I said, every blasted word of it. You've told it fair and square, leavin' off nothin' and puttin' in nothin'. You've told the true facts, out and out, up and down, without a break."

"Now, ladies," continued the tall man, "you see my story is corroborated, and I will conclude it by saying that when this house, in spite of my protest, had been opened, I entered with the others, with the firm intention of stepping into a hallway, or some other suitable place, and announcing in a loud voice that the house was about to be robbed. As soon as I found the family aroused, and my purpose accomplished, I intended to depart as quickly as possible, for, on account of the shadow cast upon me by my father's crime, I must never be found even in the vicinity of criminal action. But, as I was passing through this room, I could not resist the invitation of Barlow to partake of the refreshments which we saw upon the table. I was faint from fatigue and insufficient nourishment. It seemed a very little thing to taste a drop of wine in a house where I was about to confer a great benefit. I yielded to the temptation, and now I am punished. By partaking even of that little which did not belong to me, I find myself placed in my present embarrassing position."

"You are right there," said I. "It must be embarrassing. But, before we have any more reflections, there are some practical points about which I wish

you would inform me. How did that wicked man—Mr. Barlow, I think you called him—get into this house?"

The tall man looked at me for a moment, as if in doubt what he should say, and then his expression of mingled hopelessness and contrition changed into one of earnest frankness.

"I will tell you, sir, exactly," he said. "I have no wish to conceal anything. I have long wanted to have an opportunity to inform occupants of houses, especially those in the suburbs, of the insufficiency of their window-fastenings. Familiar with mechanical devices as I am, and accustomed to think of such things, the precautions of householders sometimes move me to laughter. Your outer doors, front and back, are of heavy wood, chained, locked, and bolted, often double-locked and -bolted. But your lower windows are closed, in the first place, by the lightest kind of shutters, which are very seldom fastened, and, in the second place, by a little contrivance connecting the two sashes, which is held in place by a couple of baby screws. If these contrivances are of the best kind, and cannot be opened from the outside with a knife-blade or piece of tin, the burglar puts a chisel or jimmy under the lower sash and gently presses it upward, when the baby screws come out as easily as if they were babies' milk-teeth. Not for a moment does the burglar trouble himself about the front door, with its locks and chains and bolts. He goes to the window, with its baby screws, which might as well be left open as shut, for all the hinderance it is to his entrance, and if he meddles with the door at all, it is simply to open it from the inside, so that, when he is ready to depart, he may do so easily."

"But all that does not apply to my windows," I said. "They are not fastened that way."

"No, sir," said the man. "Your lower shutters are solid and strong as your doors. This is right, for if shutters are intended to obstruct entrance to a house, they should be as strong as the doors. When James Barlow first reached this house, he tried his jimmy on one of the shutters in this main building, but he could not open it. The heavy bolt inside was too strong for him. Then he tried another near by, with the same result. You will find the shutters splintered at the bottom. Then he walked to the small addition at the back of the house, where the kitchen is located. Here the shutters were smaller, and, of course, the inside bolts were smaller. Everything in harmony. Builders are so careful nowadays to have everything in harmony. When Barlow tried his jimmy on one of these shutters, the bolt resisted for a time, but its harmonious proportions caused it to bend, and it was soon drawn from its staples and the shutter opened, and, of course, the sash was opened as I told you sashes are opened."

"Well," said I, "shutters and sashes of mine shall never be opened in that way again."

"It was with that object that I spoke to you," said the tall man. "I wish you to understand the faults of your fastenings, and any information I can give you which will better enable you to protect your house, I shall be glad to give, as a slight repayment for the injury I may have helped to do to you in the way of broken glass and spoiled carpet. I have made window-fastenings an especial study, and, if you employ me for the purpose, I'll guarantee that I will

put your house into a condition which will be absolutely burglar-proof. If I do not do this to your satisfaction, I will not ask to be paid a cent."

"We will not consider that proposition now," I said, "for you may have other engagements which would interfere with the proposed job."

I was about to say that I thought we had had enough of this sort of story, when Aunt Martha interrupted me.

"It seems to me," she said, speaking to the tall burglar, "that you have instincts, and perhaps convictions, of what is right and proper, but it is plain that you allow yourself to be led and influenced by unprincipled companions. You should avoid even the outskirts of evil. You may not know that the proposed enterprise is a bad one, but you should not take part in it unless you know that it is a good one. In such cases you should be rigid."

The man turned toward my aunt, and looked steadfastly at her, and, as he gazed, his face grew sadder and sadder.

"Rigid," he repeated. "That is hard."

"Yes," I remarked, "that is one of the meanings of the word."

Paying no attention to me, he continued.

"Madam," said he, with a deep pathos in his voice, "no one can be better aware than I am that I have made many mistakes in the course of my life, but that quality on which I think I have reason to be satisfied with myself is my rigidity when I know a thing is wrong. There occurs to me now an instance in my career which will prove to you what I say.

"I knew a man, by the name of Spotkirk, who had invented a liniment for the cure of boils. He made

a great success with his liniment, which he called 'Boilene,' and at the time I speak of he was a very rich man.

"One day Spotkirk came to me, and told me he wanted me to do a piece of business for him, for which he would pay me twenty-five dollars. I was glad to hear this, for I was greatly in need of money, and I asked him what it was he wanted me to do.

"'You know Timothy Barker,' said he. 'Well, Timothy and I have had a misunderstanding, and I want you to be a referee, or umpire, between us, to set things straight.'

" 'Very good,' said I. 'And what is the point of difference?'

"'I'll put the whole thing before you,' said he, 'for, of course, you must understand it, or you can't talk properly to Timothy. Now, you see, in the manufacture of my Boilene I need a great quantity of good yellow gravel, and Timothy Barker has got a gravel-pit of that kind. Two years ago I agreed with Timothy that he should furnish me with all the gravel I should want for one eighth of one per cent. of the profits on the Boilene. We didn't sign no papers, for which I am sorry, but that was the agreement, and now Timothy says that one eighth of one per cent. isn't enough. He has gone wild about it, and actually wants ten per cent., and threatens to sue me if I don't give it to him.'

"'Are you obliged to have gravel? Wouldn't something else do for your purpose?'

"'There's nothing as cheap,' said Spotkirk. 'You see, I have to have lots and lots of it. Every day I fill a great tank with the gravel, and let water onto it.

This soaks through the gravel, and comes out of a little pipe in the bottom of the tank, a beautiful yellow color. Sometimes it is too dark, and then I have to thin it with more water.'

"'Then you bottle it,' I said.

"'Yes,' said Spotkirk, 'then there is all the expense and labor of bottling it.'

"'Then you put nothing more into it,' said I.

"'What more goes into it before it's corked,' said Spotkirk, 'is my business. That's my secret, and nobody's been able to find it out. People have had Boilene analyzed by chemists, but they can't find out the hidden secret of its virtue. There's one thing that everybody who has used it does know, and that is that it is a sure cure for boils. If applied for two or three days, according to directions, and at the proper stage, the boil is sure to disappear. As a proof of its merit, I have sold seven hundred and forty-eight thousand bottles this year.'

"'At a dollar a bottle?' said I.

"'That is the retail price,' said he.

"'Now, then, Mr. Spotkirk,' said I, 'it will not be easy to convince Timothy Barker that one eighth of one per cent. is enough for him. I suppose he hauls his gravel to your factory?'

"'Hauling has nothing to do with it,' said he. 'Gravel is only ten cents a load anywhere, and, if I choose, I could put my factory right in the middle of a gravel-pit. Timothy Barker has nothing to complain of.'

"'But he knows you are making a lot of money,' said I, 'and it will be a hard job to talk him over. Mr. Spotkirk, it's worth every cent of fifty dollars.'

"'Now, look here,' said he 'If you get Barker to sign a paper that will suit me, I'll give you fifty dollars. I'd rather do that than have him bring a suit. If the matter comes up in the courts, those rascally lawyers will be trying to find out what I put into my Boilene, and that sort of thing would be sure to hurt my business. It won't be so hard to get a hold on Barker, if you go to work the right way. You can just let him understand that you know all about that robbery at Bonsall's clothing store, where he kept the stolen goods in his barn, covered up with hay, for nearly a week. It would be a good thing for Timothy Barker to understand that somebody else besides me knows about that business, and if you bring it in right, it will fetch him around, sure.'

"I kept quiet for a minute or two, and then I said: 'Mr. Spotkirk, this is an important business. I can't touch it under a hundred dollars.'

"He looked hard at me, and then he said: 'Do it right, and a hundred dollars is yours.'

"After that I went to see Timothy Barker, and had a talk with him. Timothy was boiling over, and considered himself the worst cheated man in the world. He had only lately found out how Spotkirk made his Boilene, and what a big sale he had for it, and he was determined to have more of the profits.

"'Just look at it!' he shouted. 'When Spotkirk has washed out my gravel it's worth more than it was before, and he sells it for twenty-five cents a load to put on gentlemen's places. Even out of that he makes a hundred and fifty per cent. profit.'

"I talked a good deal more with Timothy Barker, and found out a good many things about Spotkirk's

dealings with him, and then, in an offhand manner, I mentioned the matter of the stolen goods in his barn, just as if I had known all about it from the very first. At this, Timothy stopped shouting, and became as meek as a mouse. He said nobody was as sorry as he was when he found the goods concealed in his barn had been stolen, and that, if he had known it before the thieves took them away, he should have informed the authorities. And then he went on to tell me how he got so poor and so hard up by giving his whole time to digging and hauling gravel for Spotkirk, and neglecting his little farm, and that he did not know what was going to become of him and his family, if he couldn't make better terms with Spotkirk for the future, and he asked me very earnestly to help him in this business, if I could.

"Now, then, I set myself to work to consider this business. Here was a rich man oppressing a poor one, and here was this rich man offering me one hundred dollars—which, in my eyes, was a regular fortune—to help him get things so fixed that he could keep on oppressing the poor one. Now, then, here was a chance for me to show my principles. Here was a chance for me to show myself what you, madam, call rigid. And rigid I was. I just set that dazzling one hundred dollars aside, much as I wanted it. Much as I actually needed it, I wouldn't look at it, or think of it. I just said to myself, 'If you can do any good in this matter, do it for the poor man.' And I did do it for Timothy Barker, with his poor wife and seven children—only two of them old enough to help him in the gravel-pit. I went to Spotkirk, and I talked to him, and I let him see that if Timothy Barker showed up

the Boilene business, as he threatened to do, it would be a bad day for the Spotkirk family. He tried hard to talk me over to his side. But I was rigid, madam, I was rigid, and the business ended in my getting seven per cent. of the profits of Boilene for that poor man, Timothy Barker, and his large family, and their domestic prosperity is entirely due—I say it without hesitation—to my efforts on their behalf, and to my rigidity in standing up for the poor against the rich."

"Of course," I here remarked, "you don't care to mention anything about the money you squeezed out of Timothy Barker by means of your knowledge that he had been a receiver of stolen goods, and I suppose the Boilene man gave you something to get the percentage brought down from ten per cent. to seven."

The tall burglar turned and looked at me with an air of saddened resignation.

"Of course," said he, "it is of no use for a man in my position to endeavor to set himself right in the eyes of one who is prejudiced against him. My hope is that those present who are not prejudiced will give my statements the consideration they deserve."

"Which they certainly will do," I continued. Turning to my wife and Aunt Martha—"As you have heard this fine story, I think it is time for you to retire."

"I do not wish to retire," promptly returned Aunt Martha. "I was never more awake in my life, and couldn't go to sleep, if I tried. What we have heard may, or may not, be true, but it furnishes subject for reflection—serious reflection. I wish very much to hear what that man in the middle of the bench has to say for himself. I am sure he has a story."

"Yes, ma'am," said the stout man, with animation. "I've got one, and I'd like nothin' better than to tell it to you, if you'll give me a little somethin' to wet my lips with—a little beer, or whiskey and water, or anything you have convenient."

"Whiskey and water!" said Aunt Martha, with severity. "I should think not! It seems to me you have had all the intoxicating liquors in this house that you would want."

"But I don't think you're the kind of person who'd doctor the liquor. This is the first gentleman's house where I ever found anything of that kind."

"The worse for the gentlemen," I remarked.

The man grunted.

"Well, ma'am," he said, "call it anything you please—milk, cider, or, if you have nothin' else, I'll take water. I can't talk without somethin' soaky."

My wife rose. "If we are to listen to another story," she said, "I want something to keep up my strength. I shall go into the dining-room and make some tea, and Aunt Martha can give these men some of that, if she likes."

The ladies now left the room, followed by Alice. Presently they called me, and, leaving the burglars in charge of the vigilant David, I went to them. I found them making tea.

"I have been up-stairs to see if George William is all right, and now I want you to tell me what you think of that man's story," said my wife.

"I don't think it a story at all," said I. "I call it a lie. A story is a relation which purports to be fiction, no matter how much like truth it may be, and is intended to be received as fiction. A lie is a false

statement, made with the intention to deceive, and that is what I believe we have heard to-night."

"I agree with you exactly," said my wife.

"It may be," said Aunt Martha, "that the man's story is true. There are some things about it which make me think so. But if he is really a criminal, he must have had trials and temptations which led him into his present mode of life. We should consider that."

"I have been studying him," I said, "and I think he is a born rascal, who ought to have been hung long ago."

My aunt looked at me. "John," she said, "if you believe people are born criminals, they ought to be executed in their infancy. It could be done painlessly by electricity, and society would be the gainer, although you lawyers would be the losers. But I do not believe in your doctrine. If the children of the poor were properly brought up and educated, fewer of them would grow to be criminals."

"I don't think this man suffered for want of education," said my wife. "He used very good language. That was one of the first things that led me to suspect him. It is not likely that sons of boat-builders speak so correctly and express themselves so well."

"Of course, I cannot alter your opinions," said Aunt Martha, "but the story interested me, and I very much wish to hear what that other man has to say for himself."

"Very well," said I, "you shall hear it. But I must drink my tea, and go back to the prisoners."

"And I," said Aunt Martha, "will take some tea to them. They may be bad men, but they must not suffer."

I had been in the library but a few moments when Aunt Martha entered, followed by Alice, who bore a tray containing three very large cups of tea and some biscuit.

"Now, then," said Aunt Martha to me, "if you will untie their hands, I will give them some tea."

At these words, each burglar turned his eyes on me with a quick glance. I laughed.

"Hardly," said I. "I would not be willing to undertake the task of tying them up again—unless, indeed, they will consent to drink some more of my wine."

"Which we won't do," said the middle burglar, "and that's flat."

"Then they must drink this tea with their hands tied," said Aunt Martha, in a tone of reproachful resignation, and, taking a cup from the tray, she approached the stout man and held it up to his lips. At this act of extreme kindness we were all amused. Even the burglar's companions smiled, and David so far forgot himself as to burst into a laugh, which, however, he quickly checked. The stout burglar, however, saw nothing to laugh at. He drank the tea, and never drew breath until the cup was emptied.

"I forgot," said my aunt, as she removed the cup from his lips, "to ask you whether you took much or little sugar."

"Don't make no difference to me," answered the man. "Tea isn't malt liquor. It's poor stuff, anyway, and it doesn't matter to me whether it's got sugar in it, or not. But it's moistenin', and that's what I want. Now, madam, I'll just say to you, if ever I break into a room where you're sleepin', I'll see that you

don't come to no harm, even if you sit up in bed and holler."

"Thank you," said Aunt Martha, "but I hope you will never again be concerned in that sort of business."

He grinned. "That depends on circumstances," said he.

Aunt Martha now offered the tall man some tea, but he thanked her very respectfully, and declined. The young man also said that he did not care for tea, but that if the maid—looking at Alice—would give him a glass of water, he would be obliged. This was the first time he had spoken. His voice was low and of a pleasing tone. David's face grew dark, and we could see that he objected to this service from Alice.

"I will give him the water myself," said Aunt Martha.

This she did, and I noticed that the man's thirst was very soon satisfied.

When David had been refreshed, and the biscuits had been refused by the burglars, who could not very well eat them with their hands tied, we all sat down, and the stout man began his story. I give it as he told it, omitting some coarse and rough expressions, and a good deal of slang, which would be unintelligible to the general reader.

"There's no use," said the burglar, "for me to try and make any of you believe that I'm a pious gentleman under a cloud, for I know I don't look like it, and wouldn't be likely to make out a case."

At this, the tall man looked at him very severely.

"I don't mean to say," he continued, "that my friend here tried anything like that. Every word he said was perfectly true, as I could personally testify,

if I was called upon the stand, an' what I'm goin' to tell you is likewise solid fact.

"My father was a cracksman, and a first-rate one, too. He brought me up to the business, beginning when I was very small. I don't remember havin' any mother, so I'll leave her out. My old man was very particular. He liked to see things done right. One day I was with him, and we saw a tinner nailin' a new leader, or tin waterspout, to the side of a house.

"'Look here, young man,' says dad, 'you're makin' a pretty poor job of that. You don't put in enough nails, and they ain't half drove in. Supposin' there was a fire in that house some night, and the family had to come down by the spout, and your nails would give way, and they'd break their necks—what would you think then? And I can tell you what it is, young man, I can appear ag'in' you for doin' poor work.'

"The tinner grumbled, but he used more nails, and drove 'em tight, dad and me standin' by and lookin' at him. One rainy night, not long after this, dad took me out with him, and we stopped in front of this house. 'Now, Bobbie,' said he, 'I want you to climb into that open second-story window, and then slip down-stairs and open the front door for me. The family's at dinner.'

"'How am I to get up, dad?' said I.

"'Oh, you can go up the spout,' says he. 'I'll warrant it 'll hold you. I've seen to it that it was put on good and strong.'

"I tried it, and, as far as I can remember, I never went up a safer spout."

"And you opened the front door?" asked Aunt Martha.

"Indeed I did, ma'am," said the burglar. "You wouldn't catch me makin' no mistakes in that line.

"After a while I got too heavy to climb spouts, and I took to the regular business, and did well at it, too."

"Do you mean to say," asked Aunt Martha, "that you willingly and premeditatedly became a thief and midnight robber?"

"That's what I am, ma'am," said he. "I don't make no bones about it. I'm a Number One, double-extra, back-springed, copper-fastened burglar, with all the attachments and noiseless treadle. That's what I am, and no mistake. There's all kinds of businesses in this world, and there's got to be people to work at every one of 'em, and when a fellow takes any particular line, his business is to do it well. That's my motto. When I break into a house, I make it a point to clean it out first-class, and not to carry away no trash, nuther. Of course, I've had my ups and my downs, like other people. Preachers and doctors and storekeepers, they all have 'em, and I guess the downs are more amusin' than the ups—at least, to outsiders. I've just happened to think of one of 'em, and I'll let you have it.

"There was a man I knew, named Jerry Hammond, that was a contractor, and sometimes he had pretty big jobs on hand—buildin' or road-makin', or somethin' or other. He'd contract to do anything, would Jerry, no matter whether he'd ever done it before, or not. I got to know his times and seasons for collecting money, and I laid for him."

"Abominable meanness!" exclaimed my wife.

"It's all business," said the stout man, quite unabashed. "You don't catch a doctor refusin' to prac-

tise on a friend, or a lawyer, nuther, and in our line of business it's the same thing. It was about the end of October, nigh four years ago, that I found out that Jerry had a lot of money on hand. He'd been collectin' it from different parties, and had got home too late in the day to put it in the bank, so says I to myself, 'This is your time, old fellow, and you'd better make hay while the sun shines.' I was a little afraid to crack Jerry's house by myself, for he's a strong old fellow, so I got a man named Putty Henderson to go along with me. Putty was a big fellow, and very handy with a jimmy, but he was awful contrary-minded, and he wouldn't agree to clean out Jerry until I promised to go halves with him. This wasn't fair, for it wasn't his job, and a quarter would have been lots for him.

"But there wasn't no use arguin', and along we went, and about one o'clock we was standin' alongside Jerry's bed, where he was fast asleep. He was a bachelor, and lived pretty much by himself. I give him a punch to waken him up, for we'd made up our minds that that was the way to work this job. It wouldn't pay us to go around huntin' for Jerry's money. He was such a sharp old fellow, it was six to four we'd never find it. He sat up in bed with a jump like a hop-toad, and looked first at one and then at the other of us. We both had masks on, and it wasn't puzzlin' to guess what we was there for.

"'Jerry Hammond,' says I, speakin' rather rough and husky, 'we knows that you've got a lot o' money in this house, and we've come for it. We mean business, and there's no use foolin'. You can give it to us quiet and easy, and keep a whole head on your

shoulders, or we'll lay you out ready for a wake and help ourselves to the funds. And now, you pays your money, and you can take your choice how you do it. There's nothin' shabby about us, but we mean business. Don't we, pard?' 'That's so,' says Putty.

"'Look here,' says Jerry, jest as cool as if he had been sittin' outside on his own curbstone, 'I know you two men, and no mistake. You're Tommy Randall, and you're Putty Henderson, so you might as well take off them masks.' 'Which I am glad to do,' says I, 'for I hate 'em,' and I put mine in my pocket, and Putty he took off his."

"Excuse me," said Aunt Martha, interrupting at this point, "but when Mr. Hammond mentioned the name of Tommy Randall, to whom did he refer?"

"I can explain that, madam," said the tall burglar, quickly. "This man, by his criminal course of life, has got himself into a good many scrapes, and is frequently obliged to change his name. Since I accidentally became acquainted with him, he has had several aliases, and I think he very often forgets that his real name is James Barlow."

"That's so," said the stout man. "There never was a more correct person than this industrious and unfortunate man sittin' by me. I am dreadful forgetful, and sometimes I disremember what belongs to me, and what don't—names the same as other things.

"'Well, now, Jerry,' says I, 'you needn't think you're goin' to make anything by knowin' us. You've got to fork over your cash all the same, and if you think to make anything by peachin' on us after we've cleared out and left you peaceful in your bed, you're mistook, so far as I'm concerned, for I've made the

track clear to get out of this town before daybreak, and I don't know when I'll come back. This place is gettin' a little too hot for me, and you're my concludin' exercise.' Jerry he sat still for a minute, considerin'. He wasn't no fool, and he knowed that there wasn't no use gettin' scared, nor cussin', nor hollerin'. What's more, he knowed that we was there to get his money, and if he didn't fork it over he'd get himself laid out, and that was worse than losin' money, any day. 'Now, boys,' says he, 'I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll make you an offer—a fair and square offer. What money I've got I'll divide even with you, each of us takin' a third, and I'll try to make up what I lose out of my next contract. Now, nothin' could be no squarer than that.' 'How much money have you got, Jerry?' says I. 'That's the first thing to know.' 'I've got thirty-one hundred dollars, even,' says he, 'and that will be one thousand and thirty-three dollars and thirty-three cents apiece. I've got bills to pay to-morrow for lumber and bricks, and my third will pay 'em. If I don't I'll go to pieces. You don't want to see me break up business, do you?' 'Now, Jerry,' says I, 'that won't do. You haven't got enough to divide into three parts. Putty and me agree to go halves with what we get out of you, and when I lay out a piece of business I don't make no changes. Half of that money is for me, and half is for Putty. So just hand it out, and don't let's have no more jabberin'.'

"Jerry he looked at me pretty hard, and then says he: 'You're about the closest-fisted and meanest man I ever met with. Here I offer you a third part of my money, and all you've got to do is to take it and go

away peaceable. I'd be willin' to bet two to one that it's more than you expected to get, and yet you are not satisfied. Now, I'll be hanged if I'm goin' to do business with you.' 'You can be hanged, if you like,' says I, 'but you'll do the business all the same.' 'No, I won't,' says he, and he turns to Putty Henderson. 'Now, Putty,' says he, 'you've got a pile more sense than this pal of yourn, and I'm goin' to see if I can't do business with you. Now, you and me together can lick this Tommy Randall jest as easy as not, and if you'll help me do it, I'll not only divide the money with you, but I'll give you fifty dollars extry, so that, instead of fifteen hundred and fifty dollars,—that's all he'd given you, if he didn't cheat you,—you'll have sixteen hundred, and I'll have fifteen hundred instead of the thousand and thirty-three dollars which I would have had left if my first offer had been took. So, Putty, what do you say to that?' Now, Putty he must have been a little sore with me on account of the arguments we'd had about dividin', and he was mighty glad, besides, to get the chance of makin' fifty dollars extry, and so he said it was all right, and he'd agree. Then I thought it was about time for me to take in some of my sail, and says I: 'Jerry, that's a pretty good joke, and you can take my hat as soon as I get a new one, but, of course, I don't mean to be hard on you, and if you really have bills to pay to-morrow, I'll take a third, and Putty'll take another, and we'll go away peaceful.' 'No, you won't,' sings out Jerry, and with that he jumps out of bed right at me, and Putty Henderson he comes at me from the other side, and, between the two, they gave me the worst lickin' I ever got in my born days, and then

they dragged me down-stairs and kicked me out the front door, and I had hardly time to pick myself up before I saw a policeman about a block off, and if he hadn't been a fat one he'd had me, sure. It wouldn't have been pleasant, for I was a good deal wanted about that time.

"So you see, ladies and gents, it's true what I said—things don't always go right in our line of business, no more than any other one."

"I think you were served exactly right," said Aunt Martha, "and I wonder such an experience did not induce you to reform."

"It did, ma'am, it did," said the burglar. "I made a vow that night that if ever again I had to call in any one to help me in business of that kind, I wouldn't go pards with him. I'd pay him so much for the job, and I'd take the risks. And I've stuck to it.

"But even that don't always work. Luck sometimes goes ag'in' a man, even when he's working by himself. I remember a thing of that kind that was beastly hard on me. A gentleman employed me to steal his daughter."

"What!" exclaimed my wife and Aunt Martha. "Steal his own daughter! What do you mean by that?"

"That's what it was," said the stout burglar, "no more nor less. I was recommended to the gent as a reliable party for that sort of thing, and I met him to talk it over, and then he told me just how the case stood. He and his wife were separated, and the daughter, about eleven years old, had been given to her by the court, and she put it into a boardin'-school, and the gent he was goin' to Europe, and he wanted

to get the little gal and take her with him. He tried to get her once, but it slipped up, and so there wasn't no good in his showin' hisself at the school any more, which was in the country, and he knowed that if he expected to get the gal he'd have to hire a professional to attend to it.

"Now, when I heard what he had to say, I put on the strictly pious, and says I, 'That's a pretty bad thing you're askin' me to do, sir—to carry away a little gal from its lovin' mother, and, more 'an that, to take it from a school where it's gettin' all the benefits of eddication.' 'Eddication!' says he. 'That's all stuff. What eddication the gal gets at a school like that isn't worth a row of pins, and when they go away they don't know nothin' useful, nor even anything tiptop ornamental. All they've learned is the pianer and higher mathematics. As for anything useful, they're nowhere. There isn't one of 'em could bound New Jersey or tell you when Washington crossed the Delaware.' 'That may be, sir,' says I, 'but them higher branches comes useful. If Washington really did cross the Delaware, your little gal could ask somebody when it was, but she couldn't ask 'em how the pianer was played, nor what the whole multiplication-table came to, added up. Them things she'd have to learn how to do for herself. I give you my word, sir, I couldn't take a little gal from a school, where she was gettin' a Number One eddication, silver forks and towels extry.' The gent looked pretty glum, for he was to sail the next day, and if I didn't do the job for him, he didn't know who would, and he said that he was sorry to see that I was goin' back on him after the recommend I'd had, and I said that I

wouldn't go back on him if it wasn't for my conscience. I was ready to do any common piece of business, but this stealin' away little gals from lovin' mothers was a leetle too much for me. 'Well,' says he, 'there ain't no time to be lost, and how much will satisfy your conscience?' When I said a hundred dollars, we struck the bargain.

"Well, we cut and dried that business pretty straight. I took a cab and went out to the school, and the gent he got the key of a house that was to let, about three miles from the school, and he was to stay there and look at that empty house until I brought him the gal, when he was to pay me and take her away. I'd like to have had more time, so that I could go out and see how the land laid, but there wasn't no more time, and I had to do the best I could. The gent told me they all went a-walkin' every afternoon, and that, if I laid low, that would be the best time to get her, and I must jest fetch her along, no matter who hollered.

"I didn't know exactly how I was goin' to manage it, but I took along with me a big bag that was made for the conveyance of an extinct millionaire, but which had never been used, owin' to beforehand arrangements which had been made with the party's family.

"I left the cab behind a bit of woods, not far from the school, and then I laid low, and pretty soon I seed 'em all comin' out, in a double line, with the teacher behind 'em, for a walk. I had a description of the little gal as was wanted, and as they come nearer I made her out easy. She was the only real light-haired one in the lot. I hid behind some bushes in the side

of the road, and when they come up, and the light-haired little gal was jest opposite to me, I jumped out of the bushes and made a dash at her. Whoop! what a row there was in one second! Such a screamin' and screechin' of gals, such a pilin' on top each other, and the teacher on top the whole of 'em, bangin' with her umbrella. They pulled at the gal and they pulled at me, and they yelled and they howled, and I never was in such a row, and hope I never shall be again. And I grabbed that gal by her frock, and I tumbled some over one way and some another, and I got the umbrella over my head, but I didn't mind it, and I clapped that bag over the little gal, and I jerked up her feet and let her slip into it, and then I took her up like a bag of meal, and put across the field, with the whole kit and boodle after me. But I guess most of 'em must have tumbled down in hysterics, judgin' from the screechin', and I got up to the cab, and away we went. Well, when we got to the house where I was to meet the gent, he began straight off to blow at me. 'What do you mean,' he yelled, 'bringin' my daughter in a bag?' 'It's the only way to do it, sir,' says I. 'They can't holler and they can't kick, and people passin' by don't know what you've got,' and, so sayin', I untied the strings, put the little gal on her feet, and pulled off the bag, and then I'd be hanged if I ever saw a man so ragin' mad as he was. 'What do I want with that gal?' he cried. 'That's not my daughter. That gal's hair is as black as a coal, and she's a Jew, besides.' As soon as I sot my eyes on the little varmint, it come over me that I got the thing crooked, and in the scrimmage I let go of the right gal and grabbed another.

"I don't see how a man could help makin' mistakes with that school-teacher's umbrella whangin' away at his knowledge-box, but I wasn't goin' to let on. 'She ain't no Jew, nuther,' says I, 'and she's your daughter, too. You needn't try to play no tricks on me. Pay me my money; and take her away as quick as you can,—that's my advice,—or, before you know it, you'll be nabbed.' 'Pay ye!' he yelled. 'Do you think I'd pay you anything for that little Jew?' 'She's just as much a Christian as you are,' says I. 'Ain't you a Christian, little gal? and isn't this gentleman your father? and ain't you surprised that he wants to give you back to be put in the bag?' I said this hopin' she'd have sense enough to say he was her father so's to get rid of me.

"The wretched gal had been clean dumfounded when she was took out of the bag, and hadn't done nothin', so far, but blubber and cry, and try to get away, which she couldn't, because I held her frock. But now she ups and screams he wasn't her father, and she'd never seen him before. And then he storms and swears, and tells me to take her back where I got her. And I tell him I'll see him hanged first, and what I want is my money. She screams, and he swears he'll not pay me a cent, and I squares off and says that I'll thrash him out of his skin. And then he calls in his coachman, and they both make at me, and I backs out the door to get my cabby to stand by me, and I found that he'd cut out, havin' most likely got frightened, afraid of bein' mixed up in trouble. Then I seed on the highroad, some half a mile away, some men comin' gallopin', and the gent he looked out and seed 'em, too, and then says he to me, 'You'll jest take

that little Jew gal back where you got her from. She's no use to me. I'm goin'.' And at that I hollered for my money, and made a grab at him, but the coachman he tripped me over backward, and before I could git up again, they was both off, with the horses on a run.

"I was so mad I couldn't speak, but there wasn't no time for foolin', and I hadn't made up my mind which door I should cut out of, when the fellows on horseback went ridin' past as hard as they could go. They must have seed the carriage drivin' away, and thought for sure it had the gal in it, and they was after it, lickety-split.

"When they was clean gone, I looked round for the little gal, but couldn't see her. But all a-sudden she came out of the fireplace, where she'd been hidin'. She'd got over her cryin', and over her scare, too, judgin' from her looks. 'I'm glad he's gone,' says she, 'and I'm mighty glad, too, that Mr. Haskins and them other men didn't see me.' 'Who's they?' says I. 'They's neighbors,' says she. 'If they knew I was here, they'd took me back.' 'Well, you little minx,' says I, 'isn't that what you want?'

"'No,' says she. 'I didn't want to go with that man, for I don't know him, and I hate him. But I don't want to go back to that school. I hate it worse than anything in the world. You haven't no idea what a horrid place it is. They work you to death, and don't give you half enough to eat. My constitution won't stand it. I've told pop that, and he thinks so, too. But marm she don't believe in it, and my stayin' there is all her doin'. I've been wantin' to get away for ever so long, but I didn't want to be took off in a

bag. But now that I'm out of that horrid hole, I don't want to go back, and if you'll take me home to pop, I know he won't let me go back, and he'll pay you real handsome, besides.' 'Who's your pop?' says I. 'He's Mr. Groppeltacker, of Groppeltacker & Mintz, corset findings, seven hundred and something or other'—I forget the number now—'Broadway. Oh, pop does a lot of business, I tell you, and he's got lots of money. He sends corset findings to South America, and Paris, and Chicago, and Madagascar, and the uttermost parts of the earth. I've heard him say that often, and you needn't be afraid of his not bein' able to pay you. A lot more than that man would have paid you for his little gal, if you'd catched the right one. So, if you take me to pop, and get me there safe and sound, it will be an awful good spec for you.'

"Now, I begins to think to myself that perhaps there was somethin' in what that little Jew gal was sayin', and that I might make somethin' out of the gal, after all. I didn't count on gettin' a big pile out of old Groppeltacker,—it wasn't likely he was that kind of a man,—but whatever I did get would be clean profit, and I might as well try it on. He couldn't make no charge ag'in' me for bringin' him his daughter, if she asked me to do it. So says I to her, 'Now, if I take you home to your pop, will you promise, on your word and honor, that you won't say nothin' about my carryin' you off in a bag, and say you seed me walkin' along the road, and liked my looks, and told me you was sufferin', and asked me to take you home to your kind parents, where you might be took proper care of, and that I said I wasn't goin' that way, but I'd do it out of pure Chris-

tian charity, and nothin' more nor less, and here you was? And then, of course, you can tell him he ought to do the handsome thing by me.' 'I'll do that,' says she, 'and I'll tell how you talked to me awful kind for more than an hour, tryin' to keep me to stay at the school, and it wasn't till I got down on my knees and weeped that you agreed to take me to my kind father.' 'All right,' says I, 'I might as well take you along. But we'll have to go back by the railroad and foot it, at least two miles, to the station, and I don't know about walkin' across the country with a little gal dressed as fine as you are. I might get myself suspicioned.' 'That's so,' says she. 'We might meet somebody that'd know me.' And then she wriggled up her little forehead and began to think. I never did see such a little gal as sharp as that one was. Needles was nothin' to her. In about a minute she says, 'Where's that bag of yourn?' 'Here it is,' says I.

"She took it, and looked at it up and down, with her head cocked on one side. 'If I'd somethin' to cut that bag with,' says she, 'I could fix myself up so that nobody'd know me—don't care who it was.' 'I don't want that bag cut,' says I. 'It's an extry good bag. It was made for a particular purpose, and cost money.' 'Pop will pay expenses,' says she. 'How much did it cost?' 'It was four dollars cash,' said I. 'They cheated you like everything,' says she. 'You could get a bag like that any day for a dollar and seventy-five cents. Will you let it go at that?' 'All right,' says I, for I was tickled to see how sharp that little Jew gal was, and, ten to one, I'd throwed away the bag before we got to town. So she pulled a little book out of her pocket with a pencil stuck in it, and turnin' over to a blank

page, she put down, 'Bag, one dollar and seventy-five.' Then she borrows my big knife, and holdin' the top of the bag up ag'in' her belt, she made me stick a pin in it about a hand's breadth from the floor. Then she took the knife and cut the bag clean across, me a-holdin' one side of it. Then she took the top end of that bag and slipped it on her, over her head and shoulders, and tied the drawin'-strings in it round her waist, and it hung around her just like a skirt, nearly touchin' the ground. Then she split open the rest of the bag, and made a kind of shawl out of it, puttin' it into shape with a lot o' pins, and pinnin' it on herself real clever. She had lots of pins in her belt, and she told me that she never passed a pin in that school without pickin' it up, and that she had four hundred and fifty-nine of 'em now in her room, which she was mighty sorry to leave behind, and that these she had now was this day's pickin' up.

"When she got done workin' at herself you couldn't see not a ribbon nor a hem of her fine clothes. It was all black skirt and shawl, and she'd put up her sleeve, so that when her arm stuck out, it was bare. Then she took all the ribbons and flowers off her hat, and crumpled it up, and when she tied it on, what a guy she was! 'Now,' says she, 'I can go barefoot.' 'Which you won't,' says I, 'for you'll get your feet all cut. But you can muddy your shoes,' which she did, I pumpin' on 'em, so that the dust in the back yard would stick. Then we starts off across the country, and, upon my word, I was pretty nigh ashamed to be seen walkin' with such a little scarecrow. When I bought the tickets at the station, she asked me how much they was, and put it down in her book. When we got into

the cars, the people all looked hard at her, and I reckon they thought some kind of a home had been burnt down, and this was one of the orphans that was saved. But they didn't say nothin', and she fixed herself as comfortable as you please. And before long a boy came through the car with fruit in a basket, and then says she to me, 'I want two apples.' The boy had gone past us, but I got up and followed him, and bought her two apples. 'How much did you give for 'em?' says she, when I come back. 'They was two for five cents,' says I. 'Well,' says she, 'they do stick you dreadful. Two for three cents is all pop or I pays for apples like them,' and she took out her little book and put down, 'Apples, three cents.' 'Very well, miss,' says I, 'but if you want any more refreshments, you buy 'em yourself.' 'I think I'd better,' says she, and she went to work eatin' them two apples. She hadn't more than got through with 'em when the boy came around ag'in. 'I want a banana,' says she. 'Lend me five cents.' Which I did, and she put down, 'Cash, five cents.' Then the boy come up, and says she, 'How much are your bananas?' 'Five cents,' says he. 'For two?' says she. 'No,' says he, 'for one.' 'What do you take me for?' says she. 'I've bought bananas before. I'll give you three cents for that one'—pointin' to the biggest in the lot. 'I can't do that,' says the boy. 'The price is five cents.' 'I'd like a banana,' says she, 'but I don't pay more'n three cents. Take it or leave it.' And, with that, the boy went on. 'Now,' says I, 'you've gouged yourself out of a banana.' 'Not a bit of it,' says she. 'He'll be back.' And in two minutes he was back, and said she might have it for three cents. 'Have you got two coppers?'

says she. 'Let me see 'em.' He said he had, and showed 'em to her, and she took 'em and the banana, and then give him five cents, and then she didn't give the change to me, but put it in her pocket. 'Now,' says she, 'if you'd buy things that way, you'd be rich, in time.'

"When we got to the city we took the elevated and went up-town to Forty-eighth Street, and then walked over to her father's house. It was a big one, on one of the cross-streets. When we got there, she told me to wait a minute, and lookin' around to see that nobody was comin', she slipped off the skirt and the cape she had made, and rolled 'em up in a bundle. 'It don't matter about my hat and shoes,' says she, 'but they wouldn't know me in such duds.' Then, handin' me the bundle, she says, 'For twenty-five cents you can get that bag mended just as good as new, so you can take it, and it will save us a dollar and a half.' 'No, you don't,' says I, for I'd had enough of her stinginess. 'I don't touch that bag ag'in,' and I made up my mind that minute to charge the old man five dollars' worth. When the front door was opened, the servant-gal looked as if she couldn't believe her eyes, but my young woman was as cool as you please, and she had me showed into a room off the hall, and then she went up-stairs.

"I sat a-waitin' a long time, which gave me a good chance to look around at things. The room was real handsome, and I took a peep at the window-fastenin's and the lay of the doors, thinkin' the knowledge might come in handy some time. Right in front of me, on a table, was a little yellow mouse, and it struck me, as I looked at it, that it must be gold. I listened if any-

body was comin', and then I picked it up to see if it really was. I thought I heard the door-bell ring jest then, and shut it up in my hand quick. But nobody went to the door. And then I looked at the little mouse, and if it wasn't pure gold, it was the best imitation ever I seen, so I slipped it quietly in my pocket, to look at it ag'in when I had time.

"Pretty soon old Groppeltacker come in, shut the door, and sot down. 'So you brought my daughter back,' says he. 'Yes,' says I. 'And you expect to be paid for it,' says he. 'Yes,' says I, 'I do.' 'How much do you ask for your services?' says he. Now, this was a sort of a staggerer, for I hadn't made up my mind how much I was goin' to ask. But there wasn't time for no more thinkin' about it, and so says I, plump, 'A hundred dollars, and there was some expenses besides.' 'Well, well,' says he, 'that seems like a good deal, just for bringin' a little gal from school. It couldn't have took you more'n a couple of hours.' 'I don't charge for time,' says I. 'It's for the risks and the science of the thing. There's mighty few men in this town could have brought your daughter home as neat as I did.' 'Well, well,' says he, rubbin' his hands, 'I expect I'll have to pay for the whole term of the school, whether she's there or not, and the business will come heavy on me. Don't you think sixty dollars would pay you?' Now, I know when you deal with this sort of a man, there's always a good deal of difference-splittin', and so, says I, 'No, it won't. I might take ninety dollars, but that's the very lowest peg.' 'The very lowest?' says he, gettin' up and walkin' about a little. And then I thought I heard the door-bell ring again, and I was dreadful afraid some-

body would come and call off the old man before he finished the bargain. 'Well,' says I, 'we'll call it eighty-five and expenses, and there I'll stop.'

"Groppeltacker now he sot down ag'in and looked hard at me. 'I didn't ask you to bring my daughter back,' says he, speakin' gruff, and very different from the way he spoke before, 'and, what's more, I didn't want her back, and, what's more yet, I'm not goin' to pay you a red cent.' 'Now, look-a-here,' says I, mighty sharp, 'none o' that, old man. Fork over the money, or I'll lay you out stiff as a poker, and help myself. I'm not a fellow to be fooled with, and there's nobody in this house can stop me.' Old Groppeltacker he didn't turn a hair, but jest sot there, and says he, 'Before you blow any more, suppose you take my little gold mouse out of your pocket and hand it to me.' I must say I was took back at this, but I spoke back, as bold as brass, and said I never seed his gold mouse. 'Oh, ho!' says he, 'what you didn't see was the electric button under the table-cover which rung a bell when the mouse was picked up. That's what I call my mouse-trap.'

"At this I jest b'iled over. 'Now,' says I, 'jest you hand out every cent you've got, and your watch, too. Not another word.' And I jumped up and clapped my hand on my pistol in my hip pocket, and jest at that minute there was a click, and the nippers was on me, and there was a big policeman with his hand on my shoulder. I couldn't speak, I was so b'ilin' and so dumfounded, both at once. Old Groppeltacker he jest leaned back and he laughed. 'You came in,' he said to the cop, 'jest the second I rung, and as soft as a cat. And the fust thing I want you to do is to

take that gold mouse out of his pocket, and I'll be on hand whenever you let me know I'm wanted.' The cop he took the gold mouse out of my pocket, and says he, 'I know this fellow, and, if I'm not mistook, they'll be more charges than yourn made ag'in' him.' There wasn't no chance to show fight, so I didn't do it, but I says to old Groppeltacker, 'There's my expenses—you've got to pay them, anyway.' 'All right,' says he. 'Jest you send in your bill, marked correct by my daughter, and I'll settle it,' and he laughed ag'in, and the cop he took me off. Well, ladies and gents, that little piece of business, together with some other old scores, took me to Sing Sing for three years, and it tain't six months since I got out, so you can see for yourselves what hard times a fellow in my line of business sometimes has."

"Well," said Aunt Martha, "I don't approve of the Groppeltacker sort of people, but if there were more of that kind I believe there would be fewer of your kind. That story shows you in such a bad light I believe it's true."

"Every word of it," said the man. "I wish it wasn't."

And now I spoke. "Since you claim to be a truth-telling being," I said to the stout burglar, "suppose you tell me why you never attempted before to break into my house. Every considerable dwelling in this neighborhood has been entered, and I have no doubt you are the men who committed all the burglaries."

"No, sir," said he, "not men. I am the man who did 'em all, but these two friends of mine was never with me before in a bit of business like this. 'Tain't in their line. I have had pals with me, but they was

professionals. These ain't cracksmen, they don't know nothin' about it. But this one is handy at tools, and that's the reason I brung him along, but, you see, he kicked, and was goin' to give me away, and this young gentleman—"

"Never mind about that young gentleman," I said. "I have a certain curiosity to know why my house was not entered, when the others were."

"Well," said he, "I don't mind tellin' you how that was. It was on account of your baby. We don't like to crack a house where there's a pretty small baby, that's liable to wake up and howl any minute, and rouse up the rest of the family. There's no workin' in a house with comfort when there's such a young one about. I'll tell you what it is, all your burglar-alarms and your dogs ain't worth nothin' alongside of a baby for guardin' a house. If a cracksman ain't careful, the alarms will go off, and if he don't know how to manage dogs, the dogs will bark. But, by George, sir, there ain't no providin' ag'in' a baby. He'll howl any time, and nobody can tell when. So I waited till your baby was a little more settled in its ways and slept sound, and then we come along, and here we are."

This statement very much surprised me, and did not elate me. Without saying so to any one, I had flattered myself that the burglars had heard of my precautions, and of my excellent stock of firearms, and perhaps had got a notion that I would be an intrepid man to deal with, and it was somewhat humiliating to find that it was our baby the burglars were afraid of, and not myself. My wife was amazed.

"Can it be possible," she said, "that these people

know so much about our baby, and that George William has been protecting this house?"

"It makes my flesh creep," said Aunt Martha. "Do you know everything about all of us?"

"Wish I did, ma'am," said the stout burglar. "Wish I'd known about that beastly liquor."

"Well, we've had enough of this," said I, rising, "and, my dear, you and Aunt Martha must be ready to go to bed, and David and I will keep guard over these fellows until morning."

At this instant the youngest burglar spoke. His face wore a very anxious expression.

"May I ask, sir," he said, "what you intend to do with me in the morning?"

"I have already said," I answered, "that I shall then hand over all of you to the officers of justice of this county."

"But, sir," said the young man, "you will surely except me. I am not at all concerned in this matter, and it would be of the greatest possible injury to me to be mixed up in it, or to be mentioned in public reports as an associate of a criminal. I'm not acquainted with the gentleman at the other end of the bench, but I have every reason to believe, from what he said to me, that he intended to notify you if this James Barlow proceeded to any open act. For myself, I beg you will allow me to state who and what I am, and to tell you by what a strange concatenation of circumstances I happen to find myself in my present position—one which, I assure you, causes me the greatest embarrassment and anxiety."

"We've had enough story-telling for one night,"

said I, "and you had better reserve your statement for the magistrate."

Here Aunt Martha put in her voice.

"That is not fair," she said. "Two of them have been allowed to speak, and this one has just as much right to be heard as the others. What do you say, Cornelia?"

I hoped that my wife would put herself on my side, and would say that we had had enough of this sort of thing. But female curiosity is an unknown quantity, and she unhesitatingly replied that she would like to hear the young man's story. I sat down in despair. It was useless to endeavor to withstand this yearning for personal information—one of the curses, I may say, of our present civilization. The young man gave no time for change of opinion, but immediately began. His voice was rich and rather low, and his manner exceedingly pleasing and gentle.

"I wish to state, in the first place," said he, "that I am a reporter for the press. In the exercise of my vocation I have frequently found myself in peculiar and unpleasant positions, but never before have I been in a situation so embarrassing, so humiliating, as this. In the course of my studies and experiences, I have found that in literature and journalism, as well as in art, one can make a true picture only of what one has seen. Imagination is all very well, often grand and beautiful, but imaginative authors show us their inner selves and not our outer world. There is to-day a demand for the real, and it is a demand which will be satisfied with nothing but the truth. I have determined, as far as in me lies, to endeavor to

supply this demand, and I have devoted myself to the study of realism.

"With this end in view, I have made it a rule never to describe anything I have not personally seen and examined. If we would thoroughly understand and appreciate our fellow-beings, we must know what they do and how they do it; otherwise we cannot give them credit for their virtues, or judge them properly for their faults. If I could prevent crime I would annihilate it, and when it ceased to exist, the necessity for describing it would also cease. But it does exist. It is a powerful element in the life of the human race. Being known and acknowledged everywhere, it should be understood. Therefore, it should be described. The grand reality of which we are a part can never be truly comprehended until we comprehend all its parts. But I will not philosophize. I have devoted myself to realism, and, in order to be a conscientious student, I study it in all its branches. I am frequently called upon to write accounts of burglars and burglaries, and, in order thoroughly to understand these people and their method of action, I determined, as soon as the opportunity should offer itself, to accompany a burglarious expedition. My sole object was the acquisition of knowledge of the subject—knowledge which to me would be valuable and, I may say, essential. I engaged this man, James Barlow, to take me with him the first time he should have on hand an affair of this kind, and thus it is that you find me here to-night in this company. As I came here for the purpose of earnest and thorough investigation, I will frankly admit that I would not have interfered with his processes, but, at the same

time, I would have seen that no material injuries should result to any members of this family."

"That was very kind of you," I said, at which my wife looked at me somewhat reproachfully.

"If he really intended it," she remarked, "and I do not see why that was not the case, it was kind in him."

"As for me," said Aunt Martha, very sympathetically, "I think that the study of realism may be carried a great deal too far. I do not think there is the slightest necessity for people to know anything about burglars. If people keep talking and reading about diseases they will get them, and if they keep talking and reading about crimes they will find that iniquity is catching, the same as some other things. Besides, this realistic description gets to be very tiresome. If you really want to be a writer, young man, why don't you try your hand on some original composition? Then you might write something which would be interesting."

"Ah, madam," said the young man, casting his eyes on the floor, "it would be far beyond my power to write anything more wonderful than what I have known and seen! If I may tell you some of the things which have happened to me, you will understand why I have become convinced that in this world of realities imagination must always take a second place."

"Of course we want to hear your story," said Aunt Martha. "That is what we are here for."

"If I was unbound," said the young man, looking at me, "I could speak more freely."

"No doubt of it," said I, "but perhaps you might

run away before you finished your story. I wouldn't have that happen for the world."

"Don't make fun of him," said Aunt Martha. "I was going to ask you to cut him loose, but, after what you say, I think it would perhaps be just as well to keep them all tied until the narratives are completed."

With a sigh of resignation, the young man began his story:

"I am American born, but my father, who was a civil engineer and of high rank in his profession, was obliged, when I was quite a small boy, to go to Austria, where he had made extensive contracts for the building of railroads. In that country I spent the greater part of my boyhood and youth. There I was educated in the best schools, my father sparing no money to have me taught everything a gentleman should know. My mother died when I was a mere infant, and as my father's vocation made it necessary for him to travel a great deal, my life was often a lonely one. For society I depended entirely upon my fellow-scholars, my tutors and masters. It was my father's intention, however, that when I had finished my studies I should go to one of the great capitals, there to mix with the world.

"But when this period arrived I was in no haste to avail myself of the advantages he offered me. My tastes were studious, my disposition contemplative, and I was a lover of rural life.

"My father had leased an old castle in Carinthia, not far from the mountains, and here he kept his books and charts, and here he came for recreation and study whenever his arduous duties gave him a

little breathing-spell. For several months I had lived at this castle, happy when my father was with me and happy when I was alone. I expected soon to go to Vienna, where my father would introduce me to some of his influential friends. But, day by day, I postponed the journey.

"Walking, one morning, a few miles from the castle, I saw, at the edge of a piece of woodland, a female figure seated beneath a tree. Approaching nearer, I perceived that she was young, and that she was sketching. I was surprised, for I knew that in this part of the world young women—at least, those of the upper classes, to which the costume and tastes of this one showed her to belong—were not allowed to wander about the country by themselves. But, although I stood still and watched the young lady for some time, no companion appeared upon the scene.

"The path I had intended to take led past the piece of woodland, and I saw no reason why I should diverge from my proposed course. I, accordingly, proceeded, and, when I reached the young lady, I bowed and raised my hat. I think that for some time she had perceived my approach, and she looked up at me with a face that was half merry, half inquisitive, and perfectly charming. I cannot describe the effect which her expression had upon me. I had never seen her before, but her look was not such a one as she would bestow upon a stranger. I had the most powerful desire to stop and speak to her, but, having no right to do so, I should have passed on, had she not said to me, in the best of English, 'Good morning, sir.' Then I stopped, you may be sure. I was so accustomed to speak to those I met in either French or German

that I involuntarily said to her, 'Bon jour, mademoiselle.' 'You need not speak French,' she said. 'I am neither English nor American, but I speak English. Are you the gentleman who lives in Wulrick Castle? If so, we are neighbors, and I wish you would tell me why you live there all the time alone.'

"At this, I sat down by her. 'I am that person,' I said, and handed her my card. 'But before I say any more, please tell me who you are.' 'I am Marie Dorfler. My father's house is on the other side of this piece of woodland. You cannot see it from here. This is part of his estate. And now tell me why you live all by yourself in that old ruin.' 'It is not altogether a ruin,' I answered. 'Part of it is in very good condition.' And then I proceeded to give her an account of my method of life, and my reasons for it. 'It is interesting,' she said, 'but it is very odd.' 'I do not think it half so odd,' I answered, 'as that you should be here by yourself.' 'That is truly an out-of-the-way sort of thing,' she said, 'but just now I am doing out-of-the-way things. If I do not do them now, I shall never have the opportunity again. In two weeks I shall be married, and then I shall go to Prague, and everything will be by line and rule. No more delightful rambles by myself. No more sitting quietly in the woods, watching the little birds and hares. No more making a sketch just where I please, no matter whether the ground be damp or not.' 'I wonder that you are allowed to do these things now,' I said. 'I am not allowed,' she answered. 'I do them in hours when I am supposed to be painting flower-pieces in an upper room.' 'But when you're married,' I said, 'your husband will be your companion in such

rambles.' 'Hardly,' she said, shrugging her shoulders. 'He will be forty-seven on the thirteenth of next month, which I believe is July, and he is a great deal more grizzled than my father, who is past fifty. He is very particular about all sorts of things, as I suppose he has to be, as he is a colonel of infantry. Nobody could possibly disapprove of my present performances more than he would.' I could not help ejaculating, 'Why, then, do you marry him?' She smiled at my earnestness. 'Oh, that is all arranged,' she said, 'and I have nothing to do with it. I have known for more than a year that I'm to marry Colonel Kaldhein, but I cannot say that I have given myself much concern about it until recently. It now occurs to me that, if I expect to amuse myself in the way I best like, I must lose no time doing so.' I looked at the girl with earnest interest. 'It appears to me,' said I, 'that your ways of amusing yourself are very much like mine.' 'That is true,' she said, looking up with animation, 'they are. Is it not delightful to be free, to go where you like and do what you please, without any one to advise or interfere with you?' 'It is delightful,' said I, and for half an hour we sat and talked about these delights and kindred subjects. She was much interested in our castle, and urged me to make a sketch of it, so that she might know what it now looked like. She had seen it when a little girl, but never since, and had been afraid to wander very far in that direction by herself. I told her it would be far better for her to see the castle with her own eyes, and that I could conduct her to an eminence, not half a mile away, where she could have an excellent view of it. This plan greatly pleased her, but,

looking at her watch, she said that it would be too late for her to go that morning, but if I happened to come that way the next day, and if she should be there to finish her sketch, she would be delighted to have me show her the eminence."

"I think," interrupted Aunt Martha, "that she was a very imprudent young woman."

"That may be," he replied, "but you must remember, madam, that, up to this time, the young lady had been subjected to the most conventional trammels, and that her young nature had just burst out into temporary freedom and true life. It was the caged bird's flight into the bright summer air."

"Just the kind of birds," said Aunt Martha, "that shouldn't be allowed to fly—at least, until they are used to it. But you can go on with your story."

"Well," said the young man, "the next day we met, and I took her to the piece of high ground I had mentioned, and she sketched the castle. After that we met again and again, nearly every day. This sort of story tells itself. I became madly in love with her, and I am sure she liked me very well. At all events, I was a companion of her own age and tastes, and such a one, she assured me, she had never known before, and probably would never know again."

"There was some excuse for her," said Aunt Martha. "But still, she had no right to act in that way, especially as she was so soon to be married."

"I do not think she reasoned much upon the subject," said the young man, "and I am sure I did not. We made no plans. Every day we thought only of what we were doing or saying, and not at all of what we had done or would do. We were very happy.

"One morning I was sitting by Marie in the very place where I had first met her, when we heard some one rapidly approaching. Looking up, I saw a tall man in military uniform. 'Heavens!' cried Marie, 'it is Colonel Kaldhein.'

"The situation was one of which an expectant bridegroom would not be likely to ask many questions. Marie was seated on a low stone, with her drawing-block in her lap. She was finishing the sketch on which she was engaged when I first saw her, and I was kneeling close to her, looking over her work and making various suggestions, and I think my countenance must have indicated that I found it very pleasant to make suggestions in that way to such a pretty girl. Our heads were very close together. Sometimes we looked at the paper, sometimes we looked at each other. But the instant I caught sight of the colonel, the situation changed. I rose to my feet, and Marie began to pick up the drawing materials which were lying about her.

"Colonel Kaldhein came forward almost at a run. His eyes blazed through his gold spectacles, and his close-cut reddish beard seemed to be singeing with the fires of rage. I had but an instant for observation, for he came directly up to me, and, with a tremendous objurgation, he struck me full in the face, with such force that the blow stretched me upon the ground.

"I was almost stunned, but I heard a scream from Marie, a storm of angry words from Kaldhein, and I felt sure he was about to inflict further injury. He was a much stronger man than I was, and probably was armed. With a sudden instinct of self-preservation, I rolled down a little declivity on the edge of

which I had fallen, and, staggering to my feet, plunged into a thicket and fled. Even had I been in the full possession of my senses, I knew that, under the circumstances, I would have been of no benefit to Marie had I remained upon the scene. The last thing I heard was a shout from Kaldhein, in which he declared that he would kill me yet. For some days I did not go out of my castle. My face was bruised, my soul was dejected. I knew there was no possible chance that I should meet Marie, and that there was a chance that I might meet the angry colonel. An altercation at this time would be very annoying and painful to the lady, no matter what the result, and I considered it my duty to do everything that was possible to avoid a meeting with Kaldhein. Therefore, as I have said, I shut myself up within the walls of old Wulrick, and gave strict orders to my servants to admit no one.

"It was at this time that the strangest events of my life occurred. Sitting in an upper room, gazing out of the window over the fields through which I had walked so happily, but two days before, to meet the lady whom I had begun to think of as my Marie, I felt the head of a dog laid gently in my lap. Without turning my head, I caressed the animal, and stroked the long hair on his neck.

"My hound Ajax was a dear companion to me in this old castle, although I never took him in my walks, as he was apt to get into mischief. When I turned my head to look at him he was gone, but, strange to say, the hand which had been stroking the dog felt as if it were still resting on his neck.

"Quickly drawing my hand toward me, it struck

the head of the dog, and, moving it backward and forward, I felt the ears and nose of the animal, and then became conscious that its head was still resting upon my knee.

"I started back. Had I been stricken with blindness? But no. Turning my head, I could plainly see everything in the room. The scene from the window was as distinct as it ever had been. I sprang to my feet, and, as I stood wondering what this strange thing could mean, the dog brushed up against me and licked my hand. Then the idea suddenly flashed into my mind that, by some occult influence, Ajax had been rendered invisible.

"I dashed down-stairs, and, although I could neither see nor hear it, I felt the dog was following me. Rushing into the open air, I saw one of my men. 'Where is Ajax?' I cried. 'A very strange thing has happened, sir,' he said, 'and I should have come to tell you of it, had I not been unwilling to disturb your studies. About two hours ago Ajax was lying here in the courtyard. Suddenly he sprang to his feet with a savage growl. His hair stood straight up on his back, his tail was stiff, and his lips were drawn back, showing his great teeth. I turned to see what had enraged him, but there was absolutely nothing, sir—nothing in the world. And never did I see Ajax so angry. But this lasted only for an instant. Ajax suddenly backed, his tail dropped between his legs, his head hung down, and, with a dreadful howl, he turned, and, leaping the wall of the courtyard, he disappeared. I have since been watching for his return. The gate is open, and as soon as he enters I shall chain him, for I fear the dog is mad.'

"I did not dare to utter the thoughts that were in my mind, but, bidding the man inform me the moment Ajax returned, I reëntered the castle, and sat down in the great hall.

"The dog was beside me. His head again lay upon my knees. With a feeling of awe, yet, strangely enough, without fear, I carefully passed my hand over the animal's head. I felt his ears, his nose, his jaws, and his neck. They were not the head, the ears, the nose, the jaws, or the neck of Ajax!

"I had heard of animals, and even of human beings, who were totally invisible, but who still retained their form, their palpability, and all the powers and functions of life. I had heard of houses haunted by invisible animals. I had read De Kay's story of the maiden Manmat'ha, whose coming her lover perceived by the parting of the tall grain in the field of ripe wheat through which she passed, but whose form, although it might be folded in his arms, was yet as invisible to his sight as the summer air. I did not doubt for a moment that the animal that had come to me was one of those strange beings. I lifted his head. It was heavy. I took hold of a paw, which he readily gave me. He had every attribute of a real dog, except that he could not be seen."

"I call that perfectly horrible," said Aunt Martha, with a sort of gasp.

"Perhaps," said the young man, "you would prefer that I should not continue."

At this, both my wife and Aunt Martha declared that he must go on, and even I did not object to hearing the rest of the story.

"Well," said the young man, "Ajax never came

back. It is generally believed that dogs can see things which are invisible to us, and I am afraid that my faithful hound was frightened, perhaps to death, when he found that the animal whose entrance into the courtyard he had perceived was a supernatural thing.

"But if I needed a canine companion, I had one, for, by day or night, this invisible dog never left me. When I slept, he lay on the floor by the side of my bed. If I put down my hand, I could always feel his head, and often he would stand up and press his nose against me, as if to assure me that he was there. This strange companionship continued for several days, and I became really attached to the invisible animal. His constant companionship seemed to indicate that he had come to guard me, and that he was determined to do it thoroughly. I felt so much confidence in his protection, although I knew not how it could be exerted, that, one morning, I decided to take a walk, and, with my hand on the head of the dog to make sure he was with me, I strolled into the open country.

"I had walked about a mile, and was approaching a group of large trees, when suddenly, from behind one of them, the tall figure of a man appeared. In an instant I knew it to be Colonel Kaldhein. His was a face which could not easily be forgotten. Without a word, he raised a pistol which he held in his hand, and fired at me. The ball whistled over my head.

"I stopped short, startled, and frightened almost out of my senses. I was unarmed, and had no place of refuge. It was plain that the man was determined to kill me.

"Quickly re-cocking his pistol, Kaldhein raised it again. I involuntarily shrank back, expecting death. But, before he could fire, his arm suddenly dropped, and the pistol was discharged into the ground. Then began a strange scene. The man shouted, kicked, and beat up and down with his arms. His pistol fell from his hand, he sprang from side to side, he turned around, he struggled and yelled.

"I stood astounded. For an instant I supposed the man had been overtaken by some sort of fit, but in a flash the truth came to me: Kaldhein was being attacked by my protector, the invisible dog.

"Horrified by this conviction, my first impulse was to save the man, and, without knowing what I was going to do, I stepped quickly toward him, but, stumbling over something I did not see, I fell sprawling. Before I could regain my feet, I saw Kaldhein fall backward to the ground, where a scene took place, so terrible that I shall not attempt to describe it. When, with trembling steps, I approached, the man was dead. The invisible dog had almost torn him to pieces.

"I could do nothing. I did not remain upon the spot another minute, but hurried home to the castle. As I rapidly walked on, I felt the dog beside me, and, putting my hand upon him, I felt that he was panting terribly. For three days I did not leave the house.

"About the end of this time, I was sitting in an upper room of the castle, reflecting upon the recent dreadful event, when the thought struck me that the invisible dog, who was by my side, apparently asleep, must be of an unusually powerful build to overcome so easily such a strong man as Kaldhein. I felt a desire to know how large the creature really was, and,

as I had never touched any portion of his body back of his shoulders, I now passed my hand along his back. I was amazed at his length, and when I had moved my hand at least seven feet from his head it still rested upon his body. And then the form of that body began to change in a manner which terrified me, but, impelled by a horrible but irresistible curiosity, my hand moved on.

"But I no longer touched the body of a dog. The form beneath my hand was cylindrical, apparently about a foot in diameter. As my hand moved on, the diameter diminished, and the skin of the creature became cold and clammy. I was feeling the body of a snake!

"I now had reached the open door of the room. The body of the snake extended through it. It went on to the top of the stairs. These I began to descend, my heart beating fast with terror, my face blanched, I am sure, but my hand still moving along the body of the awful creature. I had studied zoölogy, giving a good deal of attention to reptiles, and I knew that, judged by the ordinary ratio of diminution of the bodies of serpents, this one must extend a long distance down the stairs.

"But I had not descended more than a dozen steps before I felt a shiver beneath my hand, and then a jerk, and the next moment the snake's body was violently drawn upward. I withdrew my hand and started to one side, and then—how, I know not—I became aware that the dog part of the creature was coming down-stairs.

"I now became possessed by a wild terror. The creature must be furious that I had discovered his

real form. He had always been careful to keep his head toward me. I should be torn to pieces, as Kaldhein had been! Down the stairs I dashed, across the courtyard, and toward a lofty old tower, which stood in one corner of the castle. I ran up the winding stairs of this, with a speed which belongs only to a frantically terrified creature, until I reached the fourth story, where I dashed through an open doorway, slammed behind me an iron door, which shut with a spring, and fell gasping upon the floor.

"In less than a minute I was aware, by a slight rattling of the great-hinges, that something was pushing against the door. But I did not move. I knew that I was safe. The room in which I lay was a prison dungeon, and in it, in the olden times, it is said, men had been left to perish. Escape or communication with the outer world was impossible. A little light and air came through a narrow slit in the wall, and the door could not be forced.

"I knew that the invisible dog, or whatever it was, could not get in unless the door was open. I had frequently noticed that when he entered a room it was through an open door, and I sometimes knew of his approach by seeing an unlatched door open without visible cause. So, feeling secure for the present, I lay and gasped and panted.

"After the lapse of a few hours, however, I was seized by a new terror. How was I ever to get out of this horrible dungeon? Even if I made up my mind to face the dog, trusting that he had recovered from his momentary anger, I had no means of opening the door, and as to making any one hear me, I knew that was impossible.

"I had no hope that my servants would seek me here. I had not seen any one when I ran into the tower. And if they should discover that I was in this dungeon, how could they open the door? The key was in my father's possession. He had taken it to Vienna, to exhibit it as a curiosity to some of his mechanical friends. He believed that there was not such another key in the world. I was in the habit of making long absences from the castle, and, if I should be looked for I believed that the tower would be the last place visited.

"Night came on. The little light in the room vanished, and, hungry, thirsty, and almost hopeless, I fell asleep.

"During the night there was a most dreadful storm. The thunder roared, the lightning flashed through the slit in the wall, and the wind blew with such terrific violence that the tower shook and trembled. After a time, I heard a tremendous crash, as of falling walls, and then another, and now I felt the wind blowing into my prison.

"There was no further sleep for me. Trembling with a fearful apprehension of what might happen next, I cowered against the wall until the day broke, and then I perceived that in front of me was a great hole in the wall of the dungeon, which extended for more than a yard above the floor. I sat and gazed at this until the light became stronger, and then I cautiously approached the aperture and looked out. Nearly the whole of the castle lay in ruins before me!

"It was easy to see what had happened. The storm had demolished the crumbling walls of the old building, and the tower, itself frail and tottering, stood

alone, high above the prostrate ruins. If the winds should again arise, it must fall, and at any moment its shaken foundations might give way beneath it.

"Through the hole in the wall, which had been caused by the tearing away of some of the connection between the tower and main building, I could look down on the ground below, covered with masses of jagged stone. But there was no way in which I could get down. I could not descend that perpendicular wall. If I leaped out, death would be certain.

"As I crouched at the opening, I felt the head of a dog pushed against me. A spasm of terror ran through me, but the moment the creature began to lick my hands I knew I had nothing to fear from him. Instantly my courage returned. I felt that he was my protector. I patted his head, and he renewed his caresses.

"Passing my hand over him, I found he was holding himself in his present position by means of his fore legs, which were stretched out upon the floor. What a dog this must be, who could climb a wall! But I gave no time to conjectures of this sort. How could I avail myself of his assistance? In what manner could he enable me to escape from that dangerous tower?

"Suddenly a thought came to me. I remembered the snake part of him. Judging from the ratio of diminution, which I have mentioned before, that part, if hanging down, must reach nearly, if not quite, to the ground. By taking advantage of this means of descent, I might be saved, but the feat would require dexterity and an immense amount of faith. This serpent-like portion of the animal, like the rest of him, was invisible; how could I know how long it really was?

"But there was no time for consideration. The wind had again arisen, and was blowing with fury. The tower shook beneath me. At any moment it might fall. If I should again escape from death, through the assistance of my invisible friend, I must avail myself of that assistance instantly.

"I stopped and felt the animal. He still hung by part of his body and by his fore legs to the floor of the dungeon, and by reaching out I could feel that the rest of him extended downward. I, therefore, seized his body in my arms, threw myself out of the aperture, and began to slide down.

"In a very short time I found I had reached the snake portion of the creature, and, throwing my arms and legs around it, I endeavored, with all my strength, to prevent a too rapid descent. But, in spite of all my efforts, my downward progress was faster than I would have wished it to be. But there was no stopping. I must slip down.

"In these moments of rapid descent my mind was filled with wild anxiety concerning the serpent-like form to which I was clinging. I remembered, in a flash, that there were snakes whose caudal extremity dwindled away suddenly into a point. This one might do so, and at any instant I might come to the end of the tail and drop upon the jagged stones below.

"Calculation after calculation of the ratio of diminution flashed through my mind during that awful descent. My whole soul was centred upon one point: When would this support end? When would I drop?

"Fortunately, I was on the leeward side of the tower, and I was not swung about by the wind. Steadily I descended, and steadily the diameter of the form I

grasped diminished. Soon I could grasp it in my hand. Then, with a terrified glance, I looked below. I was still at a sickening distance from the ground. I shut my eyes. I slipped down, down, down. The tail became like a thick rope, which I encircled with each hand. It became thinner and thinner. It grew so small that I could not hold it. But, as I felt it slip from my fingers, my feet rested on a pile of stones.

"Bewildered and almost exhausted, I stumbled over the ruins, gained the unencumbered ground, and ran as far from the tower as I could, sinking down, at last, against the trunk of a tree in a neighboring field. Scarcely had I reached this spot when the fury of the wind-storm appeared to redouble, and before the wild and shrieking blast the tower bent and then fell with a crash upon the other ruins.

"The first thought that came into my mind, when I beheld the dreadful spectacle, concerned the creature who had twice saved my life. Had he escaped, or was he crushed beneath that mass of stone? I felt on either side to discover if he were near me, but he was not. Had he given his life for mine?

"Had I been stronger, I would have searched for him. I would have clambered among the ruins to see if I could discover his mangled form. If I could but reach his faithful head, I would stroke and caress it, living or dead. But excitement, fatigue, and want of food had made me so weak that I could do nothing but sit upon the ground with my back against the tree.

"While thus resting, I perceived that the whole of the castle had not been demolished by the storm. Some of the rooms in which we had lived, having

been built at a later date than the rest of the great edifice, had resisted the power of the wind and were still standing.

"From the direction of the uninjured portion of the castle I now saw approaching a light-colored object, which seemed to be floating in the air about a foot from the ground. As it came nearer I saw that it was a basket, and I immediately understood the situation. My faithful friend was alive, and was bringing me some refreshments.

"On came the basket, rising and falling with the bounds of the dog. It was truly an odd spectacle, but a very welcome one. In a few moments the basket was deposited at my side, and I was caressing the head of the faithful dog. In the basket I found a bottle of wine and some bread and meat, which the good creature had doubtless discovered in the kitchen of the castle, and it was not long before I was myself again. The storm had now almost passed away, and I arose and went to my own rooms, my friend and protector still keeping close to my side.

"On the morning of the next day, as I sat wondering what had happened to my servants, and whether my father had been apprised of the disaster to the castle, I felt something pulling at the skirt of my coat. I put out my hand, and found it was the invisible dog. Imagining that he wished me to follow him, I arose, and, obeying the impulse given me by his gentle strain upon my coat, I followed him out of the door, across the courtyard, and into the open country. We went on for a considerable distance. A gentle pull at my coat admonished me when I turned from the direction in which it was desired that I should go.

"After a walk of about half an hour, I approached a great oak-tree with low, wide-spreading branches. Some one was sitting beneath it. Imagining the truth, I rushed forward. It was Marie!

"It was needless for us to say anything to explain the state of our feelings toward each other. That tale was told by the delight with which we met. When I asked her how she came to be there, she told me that, about an hour before, while sitting in front of her father's mansion, she had felt something gently pulling at her skirts, and, although at first frightened, she was at length impelled to obey the impulse, and, without knowing whether it was the wind or some supernatural force which had led her here, she had come.

"We had a great deal to say to each other. She told me that she had been longing to send me a message to warn me that Colonel Kaldhein would certainly kill me the next time he saw me, but she had had no means of sending me such a message, for the colonel had had her actions closely watched.

"When the news came of Kaldhein's death, she at first feared that I had killed him, and would, therefore, be obliged to fly the country. But when it was known that he had been almost torn to pieces by wild beasts, she, like every one else, was utterly amazed, and could not understand the matter at all. None but the most ferocious creatures could have inflicted the injuries of which the man had died, and where those creatures came from no one knew. Some people thought that a pack of bloodhounds might have broken loose from some of the estates of the surrounding country, and, in the course of their wild journeyings, might have met with the colonel, and fallen upon him. Others

surmised that a bear had come down from the mountains. But the fact was that nobody knew anything about it.

"I did not attempt to acquaint Marie with the truth. At that moment the invisible dog was lying at my side, and I feared that, if I mentioned his existence to Marie, she might fly in terror. To me there was only one important phase of the affair, and that was that Marie was now free—that she might be mine.

"Before we parted we were affianced lovers, pledged to marry as soon as possible. I wrote to my father, asking for his permission to wed the lady. But, in his reply, he utterly forbade any such marriage. Marie also discovered that her parents would not permit a union with a foreigner, and would, indeed, oppose her marriage with any one at this time.

"However, as usual, love triumphed, and, after surmounting many difficulties, we were married and fled to America. Since that time, I have been obliged to support myself and my wife, for my father will give me no assistance. He had proposed a very different career for me, and was extremely angry when he found his plans had been completely destroyed. But we are hopeful. We work hard, and hope that we may yet be able to support ourselves comfortably, without aid from any one. We are young, we are strong. We trust each other, and have a firm faith in our success.

"I had only one regret in leaving Europe, and that was that my faithful friend, the noble and devoted invisible dog, was obliged to remain on the other side of the Atlantic. Why this was so I do not know, but perhaps it was for the best. I never told my wife of his existence, and if she had accidentally discovered

it, I know not what might have been the effect upon her nervous system.

"The dog accompanied me through Austria, Switzerland, and France to Havre, from which port we sailed. I took leave of him on the gang-plank. He licked my hands, and I caressed and stroked him. People might have thought that my actions denoted insanity, but every one was so greatly occupied, in those last moments before departure, that perhaps I was not noticed. Just as I left him and hastened on board, a sailor fell overboard from the gang-plank. He was quickly rescued, but could not imagine why he had fallen. I believe, however, that he was tripped up by the snake part of my friend as he convulsively rushed away."

The young man ceased, and gazed pensively upon the floor.

"Well, well, well!" exclaimed Aunt Martha, "if those are the sort of experiences you had, I don't wonder realism is wonderful enough for you. The invisible creature was very good to you, I am sure, but I am glad it did not come with you to America."

David, who had been waiting for an opportunity to speak, now interrupted further comments by stating that it was daylight, and if I thought well of it, he would open the window-shutters, so that we might see any one going toward the town. A milkman, he said, passed the house very early every morning. When the shutters were opened, we were all amazed that the night should have passed so quickly.

The tall burglar and the young man now began to exhibit a good deal of anxiety.

"I should like very much to know," said the former,

"what you intend to do in regard to us. It cannot be that you think of placing that young gentleman and myself in the hands of the law. Of course, this man," pointing to the stout burglar, "cannot expect anything but a just punishment of his crimes, but, after what we have told you, you must certainly be convinced that our connection with the affair is entirely blameless, and should be considered as a piece of very bad luck."

"That," said I, "is a matter which will receive all the consideration it needs."

At this moment David announced the milkman. Counselling my man to keep strict guard over the prisoners, I went out to the road, stopped the milkman, and gave him a message which I was certain would insure the prompt arrival at my house of sufficient force to take safe charge of the burglars. Excited with the importance of the commission, he whipped up his horse and dashed away.

When I returned to the house, I besought my wife and Aunt Martha to go to bed, that they might yet get some hours of sleep. But both refused. They did not feel in the least like sleep, and there was a subject on which they wished to consult with me in the dining-room.

"Now," said Aunt Martha, when the door had been closed, "these men have freely told us their stories. Whether they are entirely true, or not, must, of course, be a matter of opinion. But they have laid their cases before us, and we should not place them all in the hands of the officers of the law without giving them due consideration, and arriving at a decision which shall be satisfactory to ourselves."

"Let us take them in order," said I. "What do you think of the tall man's case?"

"I think he is a thief and manufacturer of falsehoods," said my wife, promptly.

"I am afraid," said Aunt Martha, "that he is not altogether innocent. But there is one thing greatly in his favor: When he told of the feelings which overcame him when he saw that little child sleeping peacefully in its bed, in the house which he had unintentionally robbed, I felt there must be good points in that man's nature. What do you think of him?"

"I think he is the worst of the lot," I answered, "and as there are now two votes against him, he must go to the lock-up. And now, what of the stout fellow?" I asked.

"Oh, he is a burglar by his own confession," said my wife. "There can be no doubt of that."

"I am afraid you are right," said Aunt Martha.

"I know she is," said I, "and James Barlow, or whatever his name may be, shall be delivered to the constable."

"Of course, there can be no difference of opinion in regard to the young man," said Aunt Martha, quickly. "Both the others admitted that he had nothing to do with this affair except as a journalist, and although I do not think he ought to get his realistic ideas in that way, I would consider it positively wicked to send him into court in company with those other men. Consider the position in which he would be placed before the world. Consider his young wife."

"I cannot say," said my wife, "that I am inclined to believe all parts of his story."

"I suppose," said I, laughing, "that you particularly refer to the invisible dog-snake."

"I'm not so sure about all that," she answered. "Since the labors of the psychic researchers began, we have heard of a great many strange things. But it is evident that he is a young man of education and culture, and, in all probability, a journalist or literary man. I do not think he should be sent to the lock-up with common criminals."

"There!" cried Aunt Martha. "Two in his favor. He must be released. It's a poor rule that does not work both ways."

I stood for a few moments, undecided. If left to myself, I would have sent the trio to the county town, where, if any one of them could prove his innocence, he could do so before the constitutional authorities. But having submitted the matter to my wife and aunt, I could not well override their decision. As for what the young man said, I gave it no weight whatever, for, of course, he would say the best he could for himself. But the testimony of the others had weight. When they both declared that he was not a burglar, but merely a journalist, engaged in what he supposed to be his duty, it would seem to be a cruel thing to stamp him as a criminal by putting him in charge of the constables.

But my indecision soon came to an end, for Aunt Martha declared that no time should be lost in setting the young man free, for, should the people in town arrive and see him sitting bound with the others, it would ruin his character forever. My wife agreed.

"Whatever there may be of truth in his story," she said, "one of two things is certain: either he has had most wonderful experiences, out of which he may construct realistic novels which will give him fortune and

reputation, or he has a startling imagination, which, if used in the production of works in the romantic school, will be of the same advantage to his future. Looking upon it even in this light, and without any reference to his family and the possible effects on his own moral nature, we shall assume a great responsibility in deliberately subjecting such a person to criminal prosecution and perhaps conviction."

This was enough. "Well," said I, "we will release the young fellow, and send the two other rascals to jail."

"That was not well expressed," said my wife, "but we will not criticise words at present."

We returned to the library, and I announced my decision. When he heard it, the stout burglar exhibited no emotion. His expression indicated that, having been caught, he expected to be sent to jail, and that was the end of it. Perhaps he had been through this experience so often that he had become used to it.

The tall man, however, took the announcement in a very different way. His face grew dark and his eyes glittered. "You are making a great mistake," he said to me, "a very great mistake, and you will have to bear the consequences."

"Very good," said I. "I will remember that remark when your trial comes on."

The behavior of the young man was unexceptional. He looked upon us with a face full of happy gratitude, and, as he thanked us for the kind favor and the justice which we had shown him, his eyes seemed dim with tears. Aunt Martha was much affected.

"And his poor mother is not living," she whispered

to me. "A wife can do a great deal, but a mother can do more. If I had thought of her death sooner, I would have spoken more strongly in his favor. And now, you should untie him at once and let him go home. His wife must be getting terribly anxious."

The young man overheard this last remark.

"You will confer a great favor on me, sir," he said, "if you will let me depart as soon as possible. I feel a great repugnance to being seen in company with these men, as you may imagine, from my wearing a mask on coming here. If I leave immediately, I think I can catch the first train from your station."

I considered the situation. If I did what I was asked, there would be two bound burglars to guard, three women and a child to protect, an uncertain stranger at liberty, and only David and myself to attend to the whole business. "No, sir," said I. "I shall not untie you until the officers I sent for are near at hand. Then I will release you, and you can leave the house by the back way, without being seen by them. There are other morning trains, which will take you into the city early enough."

"I think you are a little hard on him," remarked Aunt Martha.

But the young man made no complaint. "I will trust myself to you, sir," he said.

The officers arrived much sooner than I expected. There were five of them, including the chief of police, and they were accompanied by several volunteer assistants, among whom was the milkman who had been my messenger. This morning his customers might wait for their milk, for all business must give way before such an important piece of sight-seeing as this.

I had barely time to untie the young man and take him to the back of the house before the officers and their followers had entered the front door. There was now a great deal of questioning, a great deal of explanation, a great deal of discussion as to whether my way of catching burglars was advisable, or not, and a good deal of talk about the best method of taking the men to town. Some of the officers were in favor of releasing the two men, and then deciding in what manner they should be taken to town, and if this plan had been adopted, I believe that these two alert and practical rascals would have taken themselves out of my house without the assistance of the officers, or, at least, would have caused a great deal of trouble, and perhaps injury, in endeavoring to do so.

But the chief of police was of my mind, and before the men were entirely released from the ropes by which I had tied them, they were securely manacled.

A requisition having been made on David and myself to appear as witnesses, the two men were taken from the house to the wagons in which the officers and their followers had come. My wife and Aunt Martha had gone up-stairs before the arrival of the police, and were watching the outside proceeding from a window.

Standing in the hallway, I glanced into the dining-room, and was surprised to see the young man still standing by a side door. I had thought him gone, but perhaps it was wise in him to remain, and not to show himself upon the road until the coast was entirely clear. He did not see me, and was looking backward into the kitchen, a cheerful and animated expression upon his face. This expression did not strike me pleasantly. He had escaped a great danger,

it was true, but it was no reason for this rather obtrusive air of exultation. Just then Alice came into the dining-room from the kitchen, and the young man stepped back, so that she did not notice him. As she passed, he threw his arm gently and quietly around her neck and kissed her.

At that very instant, even before the girl had time to exclaim, in rushed David from the outer side door.

"I've been watching you, you rascal!" he shouted. "You're done for now!" And he threw his strong arms around the man, pinioning his arms to his side.

The young fellow gave a great jerk, and began to struggle powerfully. His face turned black with rage. He swore, he kicked. He made the most frenzied efforts to free himself. But David's arms were strong, his soul was full of jealous fury, and in a moment I had come to his assistance. Each of us taking the young fellow by an arm, we ran him into the hallway and out of the front door, Alice aiding us greatly by putting her hands against the man's back and pushing most forcibly.

"Here's another one," cried David. "I'll appear against him. He's the worst of the lot."

Without knowing what it all meant, the chief clapped the nippers on our prisoner, justly believing that, if burglars were about to show themselves so unexpectedly, the best thing to do was to handcuff them as fast as they appeared, and then to ask questions. The reasons for not having produced this man before, and for producing him now, were not very satisfactory to the officer.

"Have you any more in the cellar?" he asked. "If

so, I should like to take a look at them before I start away."

At this moment Aunt Martha made her appearance at the front door.

"What are you going to do with that young man?" she asked sharply. "What right have you to put irons upon him?"

"Aunt Martha," said I, stepping back to her, "what do you think he has done?"

"I don't know," said she. "How should I know? All I know is that we agreed to set him free."

I addressed her solemnly: "David and I believe him to be utterly depraved. He availed himself of the first moments of his liberation to kiss Alice."

Aunt Martha looked at me with wide-open eyes, and then her brows contracted.

"He did, did he?" said she. "And that is the kind of a man he is! Very good. Let him go to jail with the others. I don't believe one word about his young wife. If kissing respectable young women is the way he studies realism, the quicker he goes to jail, the better." And, with that, she walked into the house.

When the men had been placed in the two vehicles in which the police had come, the chief and I made an examination of the premises, and we found that the house had been entered by a kitchen window, in exactly the manner which the tall burglar had described. Outside of this window, close to the wall, we found a leather bag, containing what the chief declared to be an excellent assortment of burglars' tools. The officers and their prisoners now drove away, and we were left to a long morning nap—if we were so fortunate as to get it—and a late breakfast.

In the course of the trial of the three men who had entered my house, some interesting points in regard to them were brought out. Several detectives and policemen from New York were present, and their testimony proved that my three burglars were men of eminence in their profession, and that which most puzzled the metropolitan detectives was to discover why these men should have been willing to devote their high talents to the comparatively insignificant business of breaking into a suburban dwelling.

The tall man occupied a position of peculiar eminence in criminal circles. He was what might be called a criminal manager. He would take contracts for the successful execution of certain crimes,—bank robberies, for instance,—and, while seldom taking part in the actual work of a burglary or similar operation, he would plan all the details of the affair, and select and direct his agents with great skill and judgment. He had never been arrested before, and the detectives were delighted, believing that they would now have an opportunity of tracing to him a series of very important criminal operations that had taken place in New York and in some other large cities. He was known as Lewis Mandit, and this was believed to be his real name.

The stout man was a first-class professional burglar, and nothing more, and was in the employ of Mandit. The young man was a decidedly uncommon personage. He was of a good family, had been educated at one of our principal colleges, had travelled, and was in every way qualified to make a figure in society. He had been a newspaper man, and a writer for leading periodicals, and had shown considerable lit-

erary ability. But a life of honest industry did not suit his tastes, and he had adopted knavery as a regular profession.

This man, who was known among his present associates as Sparky, still showed himself occasionally in newspaper offices, and was generally supposed to be a correspondent for a Western journal, but his real business position was that of Mandit's head man.

Sparky was an expert in many branches of crime. He was an excellent forger, a skilful lock-picker, an ingenious planner of shady projects, and had given a great deal of earnest study to the subject of the loopholes of the law. He had a high reputation in criminal circles for his ability in getting his fellow-rascals out of jail. There was reason to believe that, in the past year, no less than nine men, some condemned to terms of imprisonment, and some held for trial, had escaped by means of assistance given them by Sparky.

His methods of giving help to jail-birds were various. Sometimes liberty was conferred through the agency of saws and ropes, at other times through that of a habeas corpus and an incontestable alibi. His means were adapted to the circumstances of the case, and it was believed that if Sparky could be induced to take up the case of a captured rogue, the man had a better chance of finding himself free than the law had of keeping him behind bars, especially if his case were treated before it had passed into its more chronic stages.

Sparky's success was greatly due to his extremely specious manner, and his power of playing the part the occasion demanded. In this particular he was even the superior of Mandit, who was an adept in

this line. These two men found no difficulty in securing the services of proficient burglars, safe-robbers, and the like, for, in addition to the high rewards paid these men, they were, in a manner, insured against permanent imprisonment in case of misfortune. It was always arranged that, if any of their enterprises came to grief, and if either Mandit or Sparky should happen to be arrested, the working miscreants should substantiate any story their superiors might choose to tell of themselves, and, if necessary, take upon themselves the whole responsibility of the crime. In this case, their speedy release was to be looked upon as assured.

A great deal of evidence in regard to the character and practices of these two men came from the stout burglar, commonly known as Barney Fitch. When he found that nothing was to be expected from his two astute employers, and that they were in as bad a place as himself, he promptly turned state's evidence, and told all that he knew about them.

It was through the testimony of this man that the motive for the attempted robbery of my house was found out. It had no connection whatever with the other burglaries of our neighborhood,—those, probably, having been committed by low-class thieves, who had not broken into my house simply because my doors and windows had been so well secured,—nor had our boy, George William, any share whatever in the protection of the household.

The burglary was undertaken solely for the purpose of getting possession of some important law papers, which were to be used in a case in which I was concerned, and soon to be tried. If these papers

could be secured by the opposite party, the side on which I was engaged would have no case at all, and a suit involving a great deal of property must drop. With this end in view, the unscrupulous defendants in the case had employed Mandit to procure the papers, and that astute criminal manager had not only arranged all the details of the affair, but had gone himself to the scene of action, in order to see that there should be no mistake in carrying out the details of this most important piece of business.

The premises had been thoroughly reconnoitred by Sparky, who, a few days before the time fixed for the burglary, had visited my house in the capacity of an agent of a telescopic bookcase, which could be extended as new volumes were required, and, therefore, need never exhibit empty shelves. The young man had been included in the party on account of his familiarity with legal documents, it being, of course, of paramount importance that the right papers should be secured. His ingenuity was also to be used to cover up, if possible, all evidence that the house had been entered at all, it being desirable to make it appear to the court that I had never had these documents in my possession, and that they never existed.

Had it not been for a very natural desire for refreshment that interfered with their admirably laid plans, it is probable that the mechanical skill of Mandit would have been equal to the noiseless straightening of the bent bolt, and the obliteration of the scratches and dents made by the attempts upon other shutters, and that Sparky, after relocking all open desks or cabinets, and after the exit of the others, would have

closed and fastened the kitchen shutters, and would then have left the house by means of an open window in the upper hall and the roof of a piazza.

Thus it was that these three men, so eminent in their different spheres of earnest endeavor, came to visit my comparatively humble abode, and thus it was that they not only came to that abode, but to the deepest grief. They were "wanted" in so many quarters, and on so many charges, that, before they had finished serving out their various sentences, their ability wickedly to avail themselves of the property of others would have suffered greatly from disuse, and the period of life left them for the further exercise of those abilities would be inconveniently limited.

I was assured by a prominent detective that it had been a long time since two such dangerous criminals as Mandit and Sparky had fallen into the hands of the law. These men, by means of very competent outside assistance, made a stout fight for acquittal on some of the charges brought against them, but when they found that further effort of this kind would be unavailing, and that they would be sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, they threw off their masks of outraged probity, and stood out in their true characters of violent and brutal ruffians. Barney Fitch, the cracksman, was a senior warden compared to them.

It was a long time before my Aunt Martha recovered from her disappointment in regard to the youngest burglar.

"Of course I was mistaken," she said. "That sort of thing will happen. But I really had good grounds

for believing him to be a truthful person, so I am not ashamed for having taken him for what he said he was. I have now no doubt that before he fell into his wicked ways he was a very good writer, and might have become a novelist or a magazine author. But his case is a very sad proof that the study of realism may be carried too far." And she heaved a sigh.

THE KNIFE THAT KILLED PO HANCY

THE KNIFE THAT KILLED PO HANCY

PO HANCY was the chief of a band of dacoit robbers—those outlaws who for years have ravaged portions of British Burmah, killing, stealing, and burning, and regarding not whether the sufferers were their own people or white-skinned foreigners. Prominent among these midnight assassins and robbers was Po Hancy, but he came to his just reward at last, being trapped and killed by two native spies, and the knife by which his head was severed from his body lay on my library table. It had been sent to me by a missionary friend, to whom it had been brought as a trophy of the superior valor of the loyal and somewhat civilized natives over that of the outlaws of the jungle. It was a rude weapon, with a heavy blade nearly nine inches long, enclosed in a wooden sheath, and with a beautifully polished handle of bone-like wood. On the point of the blade and on its sides were great blotches of rust, caused by the blood of Po Hancy.

This formidable weapon, with its history, was very interesting to me. I could sympathize with the joyful satisfaction with which the little band of missionaries had looked upon the knife as a blessed sleep-giver, an assurance that they need no longer lie awake on ac-

count of rumors of the approach of that bloodthirsty and unconvertible heathen and his band.

More than that, it had another interest for me: it made me think of the man who had come to his death by it. The idea struck me that Po Hancy and I were as different from each other as two human beings could possibly be. To arrange our differences in a tabulated statement would be a work of a good deal of time and very little value, but there was one dissimilarity between us that particularly impressed itself upon me: I had heard a good deal of this tiger-like dacoit, crawling through the jungles for ten, fifteen, or twenty miles, leaping down rocks with foothold as silent and certain as that of a cat, and bounding upon his victims with the strength and swiftness of an untiring beast of prey.

How different was I—a languid, soft-fleshed, almost middle-aged lawyer, tired out by sedentary work by night and by day, to whom a walk of half a mile was weariness, and a climb to my office on the fifth floor of a lofty building, a backache. As a young man I had been somewhat athletic, but years of too much work of one kind, and too little of another, had made activity a memory, and wholesome exercise a discomfort. Po Hancy was a specimen of perfect animal life, and of the most imperfect life of the mind and soul. My body resembled his mind and soul. Of my mind and soul I will say nothing, being of a modest disposition.

Po Hancy was gone—utterly departed and annihilated, with the exception of the atoms of dried blood which might yet remain in the blotches of rust upon this ugly knife-blade. Strangely enough, it was pos-

sible that something which had helped to make up that fierce dacoit—some portions, minute though they might be, of his very self—might lie here before me, in my library, by my prayer-book and a recent letter from my mother, in a home of high civilization on the other side of the world from the Burmese jungle.

As I sat thinking of these things, I took out my pocket-knife, and began to scratch the spots of rust upon the blade, and succeeded in detaching a little of the fine dust from the iron, oxidized by means of Po Hancy's life-currents. There was so little of it that I had to moisten the end of my knife-blade in order to take it up and carefully look at it. Of course, to the eye it was like any other iron-rust, but to my mind it was far different. If there really were atoms of blood still in it, it was all, or nearly all, that remained above earth of the famous Po Hancy.

Involuntarily I balanced my penknife on my finger, as if to weigh this infinitesimal remnant of savage mortality, when suddenly the knife slipped, and, in endeavoring to catch it, the point ran into the thumb of my left hand, inflicting a slight wound. For a moment I was frightened. Here was an example of the folly of playing with edged tools, especially those that had belonged to savage heathens. This knife of the slayer of the dacoit might have been poisoned, and here I had wounded myself with the point of my own knife, to which adhered the dust I had scraped from it. It was horrible to think that in a few hours I might perish by the same knife that slew that ferocious murderer!

After a time, however, I calmed myself, for I had never heard that the Burmese used poisoned weapons,

and when several days had passed without my having felt any evil effects from the wound, which soon healed, I felt perfectly safe. In fact, instead of there being any injurious result from the cut (or the not inconsiderable nervous shock consequent upon it), I found myself in rather better health than usual, and one afternoon I walked across the Common, through the Public Garden, and four or five blocks beyond, to my home, and did not feel the least fatigue. I had not had an experience of this kind for two or three years.

During the next few weeks, many of my friends remarked that my health was certainly improving, and there could be no doubt that they were correct. I began to take walks that were moderately long. I played billiards, that used to tire me so much that I seldom played a whole game. And, what surprised everybody, and myself quite as much, I joined an athletic club. This numbered among its members a dozen or more of my friends, nearly all of whom, at one time or another, had pressed me to join the club, assuring me that it was the best thing I could do if I wished to regain my old strength and activity. But I had always refused. The very idea of gymnastic exercise was disagreeable to me, and I was annoyed at their persistence in advising it.

Now they were astonished at my change of opinion, and some of them were inclined to ridicule me, suggesting some very easy and mild methods of exercise, suitable for a small boy beginner. But they stopped that sort of chaff when I raised a vaulting-bar several inches higher than the last performer had left it, and then went over it without touching, and when, seizing

a trapeze bar, I drew up my body and threw myself around it with the ease of a circus man, some of them remembered I used to do that sort of thing, but that I could return to it now, after all these years of desk-work, amazed them.

I kept up my gymnastic exercises nearly every day, and as the club was to give a public exhibition early in the autumn, I felt inclined to take part in it. All my love for athletic sport had returned. But, in spite of my undoubted activity, there were a good many men in the club who were greatly my superiors in athletic feats, and there was no reason to suppose I would achieve any especial distinction in the public games. The conviction of this somewhat dampened my desire to become a contestant on so important an occasion, and I sat down, one evening, to consider the matter. "In the first place," I said to myself, "how did I regain all my old strength and activity? I have not altered my method of living, my diet is the same, I have had no change of air." At this moment my eye fell on the knife that killed Po Hancy, which still lay upon my table. "By George!" I exclaimed, springing to my feet, "could it have been that?"

My face flushed and my whole form glowed as I remembered how I had fancied I had poisoned myself by introducing into my veins the stuff I had scraped from the Burmese knife. And now, could it be? Was it by any means possible that I had accidentally inoculated myself with some of the blood of Po Hancy, and in so doing had introduced into my system some of his savage vigor and agility?

The more I thought of this, the more strongly I became convinced that it was so. I am a scientist in

an amateur way, and I take a great interest in experiments such as those performed by Brown-Séquard and Dr. Koch. If certain physical attributes of one class of living beings could be communicated to another by inoculation, or hypodermic injection, why should not another physical attribute be transmitted in the same way? I could see no reason why this should not be so, and, in fact, I believed myself a proof that the thing could be done.

Now, if I possessed some of the high physical qualities of the defunct Po Hancy, why should I not possess them to a greater degree? What he had had in perfection was what I lacked. If I could get what he no longer needed, and what, indeed, I would gladly have deprived him of, whether I had been able to get it or not, why should I not have it? There was really nothing to object to in this proposition, and I determined to make an experiment.

Rubbing some glycerine over the blood-spots upon the dacoit knife, I scraped vigorously until I accumulated a little mass of the gummy substance. Then, baring my left arm, and excoriating a little spot on it, as if I were about to vaccinate myself, I rubbed in the compound. "Now," said I, wrapping a handkerchief around my arm, "we shall see what we shall see."

The next morning, our waitress, who was just entering the breakfast-room, saw what she did see. She saw me come in at another door, look at the table, set ready for the family breakfast, with a large bouquet, a foot and a half high, in the center of the table, run a few steps, and then bound entirely over said table, bouquet and all, and come down upon the other side with an elastic thud, as if I had been made of india-

rubber. She screamed, and, although I had not touched anything, stood expecting a crash.

"Merciful me, sir!" she exclaimed, when she found nothing was about to happen, "I never did see anybody so supple."

When my two sisters came down,—with me, they made up the family, for my mother was in Europe,—I had to tell them about this jump, for I did not want the girl to do it.

"I have noticed, Harry," said Amelia, "that you have changed very much of late. You are as springy as a jack-in-the-box, and you used to be so poky and stiff. I think you ought not to do that sort of thing in the house. Suppose you had swept everything off this table, what a lot of damage you would have done! And I have had to have the stair-carpet stretched and replaced because you will persist in going up three steps at a time, and getting it all out of shape."

"I am very glad that Harry is feeling so strong and well," said Jenny, "and I am going to teach him to play tennis."

I laughed internally as I thought of a man with my nimble power playing a baby game like tennis.

The inoculation with the blood of Po Hancy was undoubtedly a success. I could feel strength and vigor bounding through my veins. Without hesitation, I announced myself as a candidate for athletic honors in the approaching games.

I will not here relate the feats I performed on the great field of our club. In contests of hurling, lifting, and all that, I took no part. But in running, jumping, vaulting, bounding, I excelled all competitors and broke several records. Had Po Hancy been in my

place, he might have done better, but, without the influence of Po Hancy's wild blood, no one on the grounds could have done as well. This is what I said to myself, as the crowd roared out its applause, and my friends gathered around me to shake my hand.

Not only was my whole habit of life changed, but the changes went on. I was not content to be able to bound like a tiger and run like a deer, but I wanted to do these things. Several times, when coming home from my office in the evening, I was stopped by policemen who wanted to know what I was running away from. I had some difficulty in persuading them that I ran purely from a love of exercise, and they advised against such speed in the public streets. Late at night, I used to have grand runs in the Common, but this did not suit me very well. There were sometimes observers, and the place was too open. I liked better the Public Gardens, which afterwards became my nightly exercise ground.

With a pair of soft tennis-shoes on my feet, it was my delight to steal swiftly around masses of shrubbery, dart up avenues, slip before the eyes of astonished policemen, and vanish into the shade, to bound into the branches of some heavily foliaged tree and watch the guardian of the peace stalking below me, and then, when he had passed, to drop noiselessly down, to track him over the whole of his beat, without his suspecting that my soft-falling footsteps followed his.

I did not pay much attention to my business, as had been my custom, and I indulged in exercise and long walks, even in the daytime, when I should have been at my office. I felt a great desire to hunt—I do

not mean to follow the hounds in their courses about the Boston suburbs, but to tramp through the wild woods and kill things with a rifle. As there was little scope for this sort of sport in the coast country of Massachusetts, I wanted to take a trip to the lower part of Florida, for it was too late in the season to go far West. In the forests down there I was sure I could still find wild game, and if a wandering Seminole Indian happened to interfere with me, or a reckless alligator-hunter picked a quarrel with me, I felt that I would be very well able to take care of myself.

My law partners, however, objected very strongly to my leaving town in the midst of our busiest season, and I was obliged to postpone my contemplated trip. One of the members of our firm jocosely remarked to me that, so far as business was concerned, I was a better man when I was not so well. And my sisters, who used to object to walking with me because I was so much given to going slowly and stopping often, now declined to accompany me because I strode so rapidly that it tired them to keep up with me. In fact, in the whole of Boston, I did not know any one who shared my fancies for what might be called super-exercise, and I was obliged to be content with my own company in my morning bounces and my evening spins.

But it must not be supposed that I lost at this time my desire for companionship. In truth, a novel desire of that sort sprang up within me. A distant relative of my mother, who had always been accustomed to spend some weeks with us in the autumn, now came to make her annual visit. This was a lady of thirty, or thereabout, by the name of Susan Mooney. She was the kindest, gentlest, quietest, softest woman in the

world. Her disposition was so tender that if one spoke to her of trouble or pain, the tears would almost always come into her eyes.

My sisters were sorry that Susan made her visit this year during the absence of our mother, for, although they liked her and loved her, they did not find her a congenial companion. They were lively girls, fond of society, while she was the quietest of the quiet, and fond of home. Consequently, they were well pleased when they found that I seemed to fancy Susan's company, for that relieved them of the burden. But, after a week or two, their feelings changed, and they told me they thought I was giving entirely too much of my time to Susan. My family had come to look upon me as a bachelor who would never think of marrying, and it would have surprised them to see me paying marked attention to any lady. But when my sisters saw me paying attention, so very marked indeed, to Susan Mooney, they were not only surprised, but offended.

"If you are going to marry anybody," said Amelia, "do take some one who is suitable for you. Mother is very fond of Susan, and we like her, but she would never do for a wife for you. She is no better than a bag of milk."

I looked at them and smiled. It was true that I had taken Susan to the theatre or to concerts, evening after evening, although I had been in the habit of declining to go to such places with my sisters, that I made her take long walks with me, that I spent hours with her when I should have been in my office, and that lately she had been known to flush a little when I came into the room where she was.

"Susan Mooney," I said, "is exactly the kind of girl —or lady—that I like. She is so gentle, so docile, so submissive, that—"

"Submissive!" snapped Jenny. "I should think so. She has not the least bit of will of her own. You would become a perfect tyrant with a wife like that. I believe she would grow to tremble when she heard your footstep."

"I do not say," I answered, "that I am going to marry Susan, nor that I am going to marry anybody, but if I ever do take a wife, I want one who will tremble when she hears my footstep."

They both laughed. "For a mild-mannered man," cried Amelia, "you talk bigger than any one I ever heard. The idea that any one could ever tremble at your footstep is ridiculous."

I made no answer. It was well that they could not analyze the blood that now ran in my veins. To me Susan Mooney was attractive to a degree that no other woman had been. I would not cease my attentions to her, but, perhaps, since my sisters seemed so observant, I would be more wary about them.

I had used to be somewhat of a submissive person myself, but I was such no longer. I did not always state my determination to do things against the opinions and wishes of others, but the determination was never altered. I grew to like to put myself in opposition, especially if the other party did not know how I stood. This I flattered myself might be a good thing for a lawyer, but it was very different from my old methods of thought and action. I also felt occasional desires to put myself in physical opposition to some one. I did not feel quarrelsome, but if I had

seen a reasonable opportunity of obtruding my physical superiority on a fellow-being, I should have been glad to avail myself of it. Civilized society does not offer chances of this sort sufficiently often to satisfy Po Hancyish cravings.

One evening, as I was sitting in my library and study on the third floor, I heard a slight noise downstairs, as if from the opening of a door. I knew the rest of the family had all retired, and I naturally thought that a burglar was trying to enter the house. The moment this idea came into my mind, my whole body thrilled with a warm ecstasy. I slipped off my shoes, and stole to the top of the stairs and listened. I heard the noise again! Darting back into my room, I buttoned my dark coat tightly around my neck to conceal my white collar, and then, seizing the knife that killed Po Hancy, I silently glided down the stairway. My eyes must have glistened with the expectant joy of meeting a burglar. What transporting delight it would be to steal upon the rascal and slay him with one blow! It is so seldom that one gets an opportunity to legitimately slay a rascal, or indeed any one. I do not say that I would have decoyed a burglar into the house for the purpose of slaying him, but if one were really here of his own accord, how gladly would I exercise my legal rights!

Down the stairs I went, bending low, with eyes peering into the dark, with ears stretched to catch the slightest sound, and with the knife that killed Po Hancy half raised in my right hand. I went through all the rooms on the first floor. I descended into the cellar, feeling my way about in the darkness, and stopping at intervals to listen. I even penetrated to

the back of the coal-bin, and I remember thinking with pride how I stepped so carefully as to scarcely disturb the coals that were piled about me.

Suddenly I heard the same noise that I had noticed before. It was above me, and, with a quick and silent bound, I was at the top of the cellar stairs. Here I found what had made the noise. It was a door at this spot which had been left open. I had noticed that it was not fastened when I came down, but thought nothing of it. A ventilating window was near by, and when a puff of wind came into this window the door was opened a little way, and then slowly swung, back of its own inclination.

When I discovered the facts of the case, I could almost have cried. I felt that I had sustained a cruel disappointment. Chagrined and depressed, I walked slowly into the dining-room, and sat down, debating with myself whether, or not, I would care to put on my hat and take a long night run. While sitting thus, I heard some one coming down the stairs with slow and deliberate footsteps. I knew those footsteps. They were those of Mary Carpenter, our good old housekeeper. Ashamed that she should find me sitting in the dark, I got up and began to look for matches, but before I found them, she entered, carrying a lighted candle.

"Mercy on me, Mr. Harry!" she exclaimed. "What on earth are you doing here in the dark? I just remembered that I did not fasten the top cellar door, and I came down to do it. Are you sick?"

"No," I answered, "I am hungry, and I came down to get some pie. I was just going to strike a light."

"Well, well!" exclaimed the good Mary, "that is

just like you, Mr. Harry. When you were a boy, and even a young man, you were always wanting to eat pie at night, and there were some that said that you would have better health if you had not done so much of it. But, for my part, I can't see any harm in eating good, wholesome pie, when a body feels hungry for it. I have not heard you say you wanted some pie for a long while, and it seems like good old times to give you some after everybody else is in bed. Now, it is lucky that I made to-day, with my own hands, the first pumpkin-pies of the season. I'll get one and cut you a piece. Goodness gracious, Mr. Harry! You didn't mean to cut one of my pies with that horrible knife, did you? If you did, I am truly glad I came down in time to stop you. A heathen knife in a Christian pie is something I never heard of yet, and I hope never to. It would poison it."

In a few minutes the good Mary placed before me a noble specimen of her pastry-cooking.

"There," said she, "is a pumpkin-pie fit for a king. Only kings never get them, and I suppose they would call it a pudding in England, if they had it at all. It's a good inch and a half thick, the way you always liked them, and I am sure a piece of it will not hurt you."

She cut a generous segment of the pie, and gave it to me on a plate. She was delighted to see with what pleasure I ate it, and when I asked for another piece, she was surprised, but gave it to me. When I asked for a third piece, she demurred a little, but, in spite of her really earnest protestations, I helped myself to more, and eventually finished the whole pie, which was of a size sufficient for an ordinary family.

"Well, well!" said Mary, as she took away my plate and the empty pie-dish, "this beats anything you ever did when you were a boy. I only hope you won't feel badly in the night, but, if you do, come to my door and knock. It won't take me a minute to mix some peppermint for you, or give you anything else you need."

I did not wonder that the good Mary was astonished at the midnight appetite of a Po Hancy. I began to fear, however, that I had been imprudent in letting this appetite run away with me, and felt very glad that there was some one in the house who knew what to do for victims of unreasonable voracity. However, there was no occasion for her services, for I went to bed and slept the sleep of an infant. In the morning, when I awoke, fresh and clear-headed, with a wholesome appetite for my breakfast, I felt what it was to possess the digestion of a dacoit.

The wonderful physical powers with which I felt myself endowed were sources of the greatest satisfaction to me, but they began to have their drawbacks, and, after a time, they caused me great mental uneasiness. Because I knew myself perfectly able to do certain things which I ought not to do, I wished to do them. For instance, there was a stout man of German-Jewish aspect, who, before my Po Hancy days, had been in the habit of going home from his business about the same time that I did, and frequently took the street-car in which I was riding. This man, if it were possible, always seated himself next to me, thinking, I imagined, that as I was rather a slender man he would have a better chance of crowding me, and getting more than his share of

room, in case the car became full. And when this opportunity was afforded him, he always availed himself of it to the utmost. I sometimes remonstrated with him, and sometimes tried to crowd him a little, but neither course was of any service, and it not unfrequently happened that I got up and stood on the platform to avoid this unsavory persecutor.

As I now thought of this man, my blood boiled within me. I did not, at this time, ride in street-cars, for I felt no need of them, but I felt greatly tempted to get into one at the hour I usually left my office, in the hope that the stout man would enter and sit beside me. If this should happen, and he should dare to push or elbow me, I would spring upon him and hurl him out of the door of the car, no matter how rapidly it might be moving. I ground my teeth in savage anticipation of the joy I would take in thus avenging myself for all his former insults. But my common sense and my familiarity with the common law showed me that this would be a very foolish thing to do, certain to bring me into trouble, and even ridicule, which would be worse. My uncivilized instincts were so strong that frequently I was obliged, figuratively, to put my hand upon my own shoulder, to prevent myself from entering a car in which there was a chance of encountering the stout German.

There were other novel and perhaps aboriginal cravings which came upon me at this time. One of these was an abnormal longing to possess desirable objects. For instance, in a jeweller's window, which I frequently passed, there was a handsome brooch which attracted my favorable attention. It was composed of a large stone of the moonstone order, artisti-

cally surrounded by brilliants. It struck me that this would be a most appropriate ornament for the gentle Susan. Several times I stood looking at it, and planning how I might get it for her without resort to the usual methods of exchange. A strong tap on the window-pane, a quick snatch, and then a series of dartings and doublings along a route which I had marked out in my mind—around a corner, up an alley, over the fences of two back yards that I had noted, into a small street, where I would change my soft, light-colored felt hat for a dark travelling-cap which I would have in my pocket; then a rush into a crowded thoroughfare, and a leisurely walk home. But this scheme did not altogether please me. I would have better liked, in the dark hours of the morning, to climb a tree which stood before the jeweller's shop, to go out on a limb until it bent down to the level of the transom window over the top of the door, to open this, slip in, pocket the brooch, climb up to the transom, listen, drop outside, and noiselessly glide away.

I had entirely too many fancies of this kind, and, when away from my temptations, my mind was seriously troubled by the thoughts of the dangers to which I was exposed. This robber blood was making a different man of me—a man who ran the risk of ending his life in a prison. I used to ponder for hours upon my alarming condition. Sometimes I thought of myself as another Mr. Hyde. But alas! my case was worse than that. I was not sometimes good and sometimes bad. I was under an evil influence which was steadfast and of increasing power, the effects of which, my reason told me, must be permanent. When a Christian gentleman puts dacoit blood into his veins, there

is no way of his getting it out again, except by letting out all of his blood—a remedy I did not fancy. How earnestly I wished Po Hancy had been converted before he had been killed!

But had the robber chief repented and lived a proper life, he would not have been killed, and I would have had no knife with his blood on it, and my present physical perfection would never have come to me. When I looked upon the matter in this light, I asked myself whether I would have been satisfied had it been so, and I could not bring myself to answer yes. After all, it was my vanity that had brought this terrible peril upon me. Had I been contented with the little prick my knife had given me, I might have been no more than the active, healthy gentleman I had always wished to be. But that foolish desire to shine in the athletic games had not only given me an excess of strength, but also the impulses of a jungle sneak.

When troubled thus, my greatest relief was the society of Susan Mooney. The flow of her gentle soul was so unrippled that it seldom failed to soothe me. Feeling the great good she was to me, I now made up my mind to marry her, and it delighted me to think that, in so doing, I would not be troubled by the ordinary antecedents of matrimony. I would simply inform her that she was to be my wife, then all she would have to do was to set herself to the task of getting ready for the ceremony. But I could not always avail myself of the soothings of Susan, and the agitations of my mind became more harassing and frequent.

Early one evening I was sitting alone in my study, torn by a desire to take a long walk in the suburbs,

and restrained by a fear that if I did so I should be induced to forget that I was not a prowling dacoit. Suddenly I heard a cry below stairs. It was the voice of my dear Susan, in terror and pain. In ten seconds I had bounded down to the drawing-room, where, between my two sisters, I found the fair Susan almost fainting, with one of her white hands reddened with her blood, and in her lap the knife that killed Po Hancy. The situation was quickly explained. That afternoon Jenny had brought down the knife to show a visitor interested in such things, and now Susan had been playing with it, and had cut her finger!

The wound was not a serious one, and the sufferer was soon cared for and conducted to her room. I took the knife up-stairs, determined to lock it up securely. But, as I was about to replace it in its sheath, I noticed that the blade was discolored in several places with fresh blood—the blood of Susan, still moist.

I sat for some ten minutes, earnestly gazing upon the knife-blade. What a contrast!—the blood of Po Hancy, the blood of Susan Mooney. As I pondered, a thought, seemingly filled with the light of a coming salvation, dawned upon me. I bared my right arm, and with my penknife scratched the skin for a space of over an inch in diameter. On this I rubbed the moist blood of Susan, as much of it as I could get from the great knife-blade, and which exceeded in quantity that which I had obtained from the rust-spots. I trembled when this deed was finished. I did not dare to think what might happen, but I hoped.

The next day my right arm was very sore, and I could not write. I felt assured that no one with

dacoit blood in his veins should be allowed to perform an operation of the nature of vaccination. As my disability, the cause of which I did not explain to any one, gave a reason for a little vacation, I went off to the Berkshire Hills. The gay season of Stockbridge and Lenox had not yet come to an end, and the life there interested me very much. It was a pleasant change. For years I had mingled very little in fashionable society. I met a good many friends and acquaintances, all glad to have me with them, and surprised as well as pleased at my willingness to enter into all the festive doings of the region. In fact, I agreed to whatever was proposed to me, except when two of my fellow-members of the athletic club asked me to join them in a long tramp. This I declined, mainly for the reason that they had planned to start very early in the morning before sunrise, and I would not give up the delightful and tranquillizing hours of sleep which immediately precede a late breakfast.

At the close of the day after my return, I rode home from my office in a street-car. At the corner where I had been in the habit of expecting him, the stout German got in. There was an empty place next to me, large enough for an ordinary person, but not large enough for him. He came directly toward me, and endeavored to squeeze himself into the vacancy. As he did so, I moved as far as possible away from him, in order to give him the room he desired.

That evening my sister Amelia took me aside. "Harry," said she, "I have something very serious to say to you. Susan has had a letter from mother, begging her to stay here until her return. Now, this

will keep her with us a month longer at least, and I think this is a very deplorable thing."

"Why so?" I asked.

"Because it will give you an opportunity to carry on your absurd courtship of her, and that cannot fail to end in your marrying her, and I should like to know, Harry, what could be more deplorable than that? In fact, Jenny and I have made up our minds that we will not stand it. Mother may consent to live in the house with that simple Susan as your wife, but we never will."

"My dear sister," said I, "you and Jenny need not trouble yourselves on that subject. I do not in the least desire to marry Susan Mooney. She is a good woman, very good, but she is not the sort of person I would want for a wife. I should think you could see that for yourselves. The life of a hard-working man like myself is monotonous enough without Susan. But now that you have spoken of marriage, I will say that I met two ladies, one in Stockbridge and the other at Lenox, either of whom would make me a good wife. I rather prefer the Lenox girl, Miss Camilla Sunderland. Do you know her?"

"Camilla Sunderland!" exclaimed my sister. "She is a leading belle, a dazzling star of the season. She goes everywhere, does everything, drives four-in-hand, plays tennis-matches, is devoted to balls, theatre-parties—why, my dear Harry, I should think you could not exist with a wife like that."

"Miss Sunderland," said I, leaning back in a soft arm-chair, "would be just the wife I dream of. I am sure I prefer her to the lady at Stockbridge. I am not disposed, as you know, to take part, to any great

extent, in the exciting life of the fashionable world, but I should wish to feel that, through my wife, I had a part in it."

"Well!" exclaimed Amelia, "you may never get Camilla Sunderland, but I am truly glad that you have given up all thoughts of Susan. But, Harry, a very great change must have come over you. It was not long ago that you told me you wanted a wife who would tremble at your tread."

I made a gesture of languid disapprobation. "My dear girl," said I, "I should despise a woman who would tremble at my tread. What I want is a wife who will guide, direct, and lead me, upon whom I can lean and depend; and I think Miss Sunderland is such a woman."

Amelia stared at me in utter amazement. "I don't understand you!" she cried. "You seem to have been utterly transformed, and to have lost all sentiments of manliness! If Susan Mooney were a man, I believe she would have very much the same feelings."

"My dear," I answered, "Susan Mooney would make a very good man, a very pleasant and accommodating helpmeet to an active-minded woman."

To this remark Amelia made no answer, but casting a look of scorn upon me she departed.

I HAVE not yet married. Miss Sunderland has not signified to me that it would please her to accept my addresses, and, of course, I have not had the assurance to force the subject upon her. But I live in hopes.

As for the knife that killed Po Hancy, I threw it into the Charles River. It was a dangerous knife.

DUSKY PHILOSOPHY

DUSKY PHILOSOPHY

IN TWO EXPOSITIONS

FIRST EXPOSITION: A STORY OF SEVEN DEVILS

THE negro church which stood in the pine woods near the little village of Oxford Cross-roads, in one of the lower counties of Virginia, was presided over by an elderly individual, known to the community in general as "Uncle Pete." But on Sundays the members of his congregation addressed him as "Brudder Pete." He was an earnest and energetic man, and, although he could neither read nor write, he had for many years expounded the Scriptures to the satisfaction of his hearers. His memory was good, and those portions of the Bible which, from time to time, he had heard read, were used by him, and frequently with powerful effect, in his sermons. His interpretations of the Scriptures were generally entirely original, and were made to suit the needs, or what he supposed to be the needs, of his congregation.

Whether as "Uncle Pete" in the garden and cornfield, or as "Brudder Pete" in the church, he enjoyed the good opinion of everybody excepting one person, and that was his wife. She was a high-tempered and somewhat dissatisfied person, who had conceived the

idea that her husband was in the habit of giving too much time to the church, and too little to the acquisition of corn-bread and pork. On a certain Saturday she gave him a most tremendous scolding, which so affected the spirits of the good man that it influenced his decision in regard to the selection of the subject for his sermon the next day.

His congregation was accustomed to being astonished, and rather liked it, but never before had their minds received such a shock as when the preacher announced the subject of his discourse. He did not take any particular text, for this was not his custom, but he boldly stated that the Bible declared that every woman in this world was possessed by seven devils; and the evils which this state of things had brought upon the world he showed forth with much warmth and feeling. Subject-matter, principally from his own experience, crowded in upon his mind, and he served it out to his audience hot and strong. If his deductions could have been proved to be correct, all women were creatures who, by reason of their sevenfold diabolic possession, were not capable of independent thought or action, and who should in tears and humility place themselves absolutely under the direction and authority of the other sex.

When he approached the conclusion of his sermon, Brother Peter closed with a bang the Bible, which, although he could not read a word of it, always lay open before him while he preached, and delivered the concluding exhortation of his sermon.

"Now, my dear brev'ren ob dis congregation," he said, "I want you to understan' dat dar's nuffin in dis yer sarmon wot you've jus' heerd ter make you think

youse'fs angels. By no means, brevren. You was all brung up by women, an' you've got ter lib wid 'em, an ef anything in dis yer worl' is ketchin', my dear brevren, it's habin' debbils, an' from wot I've seen ob some ob de men ob dis worl', I 'spec' dey is persest ob 'bout all de debbils dey got room fer. But de Bible don' say nuffin p'intedly on de subjec' ob de number ob debbils in man, an' I 'spec' dose dat's got 'em—an' we ought ter feel pow'ful thankful, my dear brevren, dat de Bible don' say we-all's got 'em—has 'em 'cordin' to sarcumstances. But wid de women it's dif'rent. Dey's got jus' seben, an' bless my soul, brevren, I think dat's 'nuf.

"While I was a-turnin' ober in my min' de subjec' ob dis sarmon, dere come ter me a bit ob Scripter wot I heerd at a big preachin' an' baptizin' at Kyarter's Mills, 'bout ten year ago. One ob de preachers was a-tellin' about ol' Mudder Ebe a-eatin' de apple, an' says he: 'De sarpint fus' come along wid a red apple, an' says he: "You gib dis yer ter yer husban', an' he think it so mighty good dat when he done eat it he gib you anything you ax him fer, ef you tell him whar de tree is." Ebe she took one bite, an' den she frew dat apple away. "Wot you mean, you triflin' sarpint," says she, "a-fotchin' me dat apple wot ain't good fer nuffin but ter make cider wid?" Den de sarpint he go fotch her a yaller apple, an' she took one bite, an' den says she: "Go 'long wid ye, you fool sarpint, wot you fotch me dat June apple wot ain't got no taste to it?" Den de sarpint he think she like sumpin' sharp, an' he fotch her a green apple. She takes one bite ob it, an' den she frows it at his head, an' sings out: "Is you 'spectin' me to gib dat apple to yer Uncle Adam an'

gib him de colic?" Den de debbil he fotch her a lady-apple, but she say she won't take no sich triflin' nubbins as dat to her husban', an' she took one bite ob it, an' frew it away. Den he go fotch her two udder kin' ob apples, one yaller wid red stripes, an' de udder one red on one side an' green on de udder—mighty good-lookin' apples, too, de kin' you git two dollars a bar'l fer at de store. But Ebe she wouldn't hab neider ob 'em, an' when she done took one bite out ob each one, she frew it away. Den de ol' debbil-sarpint he scratch he head, an' he say to hese'f: "Dis yer Ebe she pow'ful 'tic'lar 'bout her apples. Reckin I'll have ter wait till after fros', an' fotch her a real good one." An' he done wait till after fros', an' den he fotch her a' Albemarle pippin, an' when she took one bite ob dat, she jus' go 'long an eat it all up, core, seeds, an' all. "Look h'yar, sarpint," says she, "hab you got anudder ob dem apples in yer pocket?" An' den he tuk one out, an' gib it to her. " 'Cuse me," says she, "I's gwine ter look up Adam, an' ef he don' want ter know whar de tree is wot dese apples grow on, you can hab him fer a corn-field han'." '

"An' now, my dear brevren," said Brother Peter, "while I was a-turnin' dis subjec' ober in my min', an' wonderin' how de women come ter hab jus' seben debbils apiece, I done reckerleck dat bit ob Scripter wot I heerd at Kyarter's Mills, an' I reckin dat 'splains how de debbils got inter woman. De sarpint he done fotch Mudder Ebe seben apples, an' ebery one she take a bite out ob gib her a debbil."

As might have been expected, this sermon produced a great sensation, and made a deep impression on the congregation. As a rule the men were tolerably well

satisfied with it, and when the services were over many of them made it the occasion of shy but very plainly pointed remarks to their female friends and relatives.

But the women did not like it at all. Some of them became angry, and talked very forcibly, and feelings of indignation soon spread among all the sisters of the church. If their minister had seen fit to stay at home and preach a sermon like this to his own wife (who, it may be remarked, was not present on this occasion), it would have been well enough, provided he had made no allusions to outsiders, but to come there and preach such things to them was entirely too much for their endurance. Each one of the women knew she had not seven devils, and only a few of them would admit of the possiblity of any of the others being possessed by quite so many.

Their preacher's explanation of the manner in which every woman came to be possessed of just so many devils appeared to them of little importance. What they objected to was the fundamental doctrine of his sermon, which was based on his assertion that the Bible declared that every woman had seven devils. They were not willing to believe that the Bible said any such thing. Some of them went so far as to state it was their opinion that Uncle Pete had got this fool notion from some of the lawyers at the court-house when he was on a jury a month or so before. It was quite noticeable that, although Sunday afternoon had scarcely begun, the majority of the women of the congregation called their minister "Uncle Pete." This was very strong evidence of a sudden decline in his popularity.

Some of the more vigorous-minded women, not seeing their minister among the other people in the clearing in front of the log church, went to look for him. But he was not to be found. His wife had ordered him to be home early, and soon after the congregation had been dismissed he had departed by a short cut through the woods. That afternoon an irate committee, composed principally of women, but including also a few men who had expressed disbelief in the new doctrine, arrived at the cabin of their preacher, but found there only his wife, cross-grained old Aunt Rebecca. She informed them that her husband was not at home.

"He's done 'gaged hisse'f," she said, "ter cut an' haul wood fer Kunnel Martin, ober on Little Mount'n, fer de whole ob nex' week. It's fourteen or thirteen mile from h'yar, an' ef he'd started ter-morrer mawnin', he'd los' a'mos' a whole day. 'Sides dat, I done tol' him dat ef he git dar ter-night he'd hab his supper frowed in. Wot you all want wid him? Gwine to pay him fer preachin'?"

Any such intention as this was instantaneously denied, and Aunt Rebecca was informed of the subject upon which her visitors had come to have a very plain talk with her husband.

Strange to say, the announcement of the new and startling dogma had apparently no disturbing effect upon Aunt Rebecca. On the contrary, the old woman seemed rather to enjoy the news.

"Reckin he oughter know all 'bout dat," she said. "He's done had three wives, an' he ain't got rid o' dis one yit."

Judging from her chuckles and the waggings of her

head as she made this remark, it might have been imagined that Aunt Rebecca was rather proud of the fact that her husband thought her capable of exhibiting a different kind of diabolism every day in the week.

The leader of the indignant church-members was Susan Henry, a mulatto woman of a very independent turn of mind. She prided herself that she never worked in anybody's house but her own, and this immunity from outside service gave her a certain preeminence among her sisters. Not only did Susan share the general resentment with which the startling statement of old Peter had been received, but she felt that its promulgation had affected her position in the community. If every woman was possessed by seven devils, then, in this respect, she was no better nor worse than any of the others, and at this her proud heart rebelled. If the preacher had said some women had eight devils and others six, it would have been better. She might then have made a mental arrangement in regard to her relative position which would have consoled her somewhat. But now there was no chance for that. The words of the preacher had equally debased all women.

A meeting of the disaffected church-members was held the next night at Susan Henry's cabin, or rather in the little yard about it, for the house was not large enough to hold the people who attended it. The meeting was not regularly organized, but everybody said what he or she had to say, and the result was a great deal of clamor, and a general increase of indignation against Uncle Pete.

"Look h'yar!" cried Susan, at the end of some en-

ergetic remarks, "is dar any pusson h'yar who kin count up figgers?"

Inquiries on the subject ran through the crowd, and in a few moments a black boy, about fourteen, was pushed forward as an expert in arithmetic.

"Now, you Jim," said Susan, "you's been to school, an' you kin count up figgers. 'Cordin' ter de chu'ch-books dar's forty-seben women b'longin' to our meetin', an' ef each one ob dem dar has got seben debbils in her, I jus' wants you ter tell me how many debbils come to chu'ch ebery clear Sunday ter hear dat ol' Uncle Pete preach."

This view of the case created a sensation, and much interest was shown in the result of Jim's calculations, which were made by the aid of the back of an old letter and a piece of pencil, furnished by Susan. The result was at last announced as three hundred and nineteen —which, although not precisely correct, was near enough to satisfy the company.

"Now, you jus' turn dat ober in you-all's minds," said Susan. "More'n free hunderd debbils in chu'ch ebery Sunday, an' we women fotchin' 'em. Does anybody s'pose I's gwine ter b'lieve dat fool talk?"

A middle-aged man now lifted up his voice and said: "I's been thinkin' ober dis h'yar matter, an' I's 'cluded dat p'r'aps de words ob de preacher was used in a figgeratous form o' sense. P'r'aps de seben debbils meant chillun."

These remarks were received with no favor by the assemblage.

"Oh, you git out!" cried Susan. "Yer ol' woman's got seben chillun, shore 'nuf, an' I 'spec' dey's all debbils. But dem sent'ments don't apply ter all de udder

women h'yar, 'tic'larly ter dem dar young uns wot ain't married yit."

This was good logic, but the feeling on the subject proved to be even stronger, for the mothers in the company became so angry at their children being considered devils that for a time there seemed to be danger of an Amazonian attack on the unfortunate speaker. This was averted, but a great deal of uproar now ensued, and it was the general feeling that something ought to be done to show the deep-seated resentment with which the horrible charge against the mothers and sisters of the congregation had been met. Many violent propositions were made, some of the younger men going so far as to offer to burn down the church. It was finally agreed, quite unanimously, that old Peter should be unceremoniously ousted from his place in the pulpit, which he had filled for so many years.

As the week passed on, some of the older men of the congregation, who had friendly feelings toward their old companion and preacher, talked the matter over among themselves, and afterwards, with many of their fellow-members, succeeded at last in gaining the general consent that Uncle Peter should be allowed a chance to explain himself, and to give his grounds and reasons for his astounding statement in regard to womankind. If he could show biblical authority for this, of course nothing more could be said. But if he could not, then he must get down from the pulpit, and sit for the rest of his life on a back seat of the church. This proposition met with the more favor because even those who were most indignant had an earnest curiosity to know what the old man would say for himself.

During all this time of angry discussion, good old Peter was quietly and calmly cutting and hauling wood on Little Mountain. His mind was in a condition of great comfort and peace, for not only had he been able to rid himself, in his last sermon, of many of the hard thoughts concerning women that had been gathering themselves together for years, but his absence from home had given him a holiday from the harassments of Aunt Rebecca's tongue, so that no new notions of woman's culpability had risen within him. He had dismissed the subject altogether, and had been thinking over a sermon regarding baptism, which he thought he could make convincing to certain of the younger members of his congregation.

He arrived at home very late on Saturday night, and retired to his simple couch without knowing anything of the terrible storm which had been gathering through the week, and which was to burst upon him on the morrow. But the next morning, long before church-time, he received warning enough of what was going to happen. Individuals and deputations gathered in and about his cabin—some to tell him all that had been said and done, some to inform him what was expected of him, some to stand about and look at him, some to scold, some to denounce, but, alas! not one to encourage, nor one to call him "Brudder Pete," that Sunday appellation dear to his ears. But the old man possessed a stubborn soul, not easily to be frightened.

"Wot I says in de pulpit," he remarked, "I'll 'splain in de pulpit, an' you-all 'u'd better git 'long to de chu'ch, an' when de time fer de sarvice come, I'll be dar."

This advice was not promptly acted upon, but in the course of half an hour nearly all the villagers and loungers had gone off to the church in the woods. And when Uncle Peter had put on his high black hat, somewhat battered, but still sufficiently clerical-looking for that congregation, and had given something of a polish to his cowhide shoes, he betook himself by the accustomed path to the log building where he had so often held forth to his people. As soon as he entered the church he was formally instructed by a committee of the leading members that before he began to open the services, he must make it plain to the congregation that what he had said on the preceding Sunday about every woman being possessed by seven devils was Scripture truth, and not mere wicked nonsense out of his own brain. If he could not do that, they wanted no more praying or preaching from him.

Uncle Peter made no answer, but, ascending the little pulpit, he put his hat on the bench behind him, where it was used to repose, took out his red cotton handkerchief and blew his nose in his accustomed way, and looked about him. The house was crowded. Even Aunt Rebecca was there.

After a deliberate survey of his audience, the preacher spoke: "Brevren an' sisters, I see afore me Brudder Bill Hines, who kin read de Bible, an' has got one. Ain't dat so, brudder?"

Bill Hines having nodded and modestly grunted assent, the preacher continued: "An' dar's Aun' Priscilla's boy Jake, who ain't a brudder yit,—though he's plenty old 'nuf, min', I tell ye,—an' he kin read de Bible fus'-rate, an' has read it ter me ober an' ober ag'in. Ain't dat so, Jake?"

Jake grinned, nodded, and hung his head, very uncomfortable at being thus publicly pointed out.

"An' dar's good ol' Aun' Patty, who knows more Scripter dan anybuddy h'yar, havin' been teached by de little gals from Kunnel Jasper's, an' by dere mudders afore 'em. I reckin she know de hull Bible straight froo, from de Garden of Eden to de New Jerus'lum. An' dar are udders h'yar who knows de Scripters, some one part an' some anudder. Now, I axes ebery one ob you-all wot know de Scripters ef he don' 'member how de Bible tells how our Lord, when he was on dis yearth, cas' seben debbils out o' Mary Magdalum?"

A murmur of assent came from the congregation. Most of them remembered that.

"But did any ob you eber read, or hab read to you, dat he eber cas' 'em out o' any udder woman?"

Negative grunts and shakes of the head signified that nobody had ever heard of this.

"Well, den," said the preacher, gazing blandly around, "all de udder women's got 'em yit."

A deep silence fell upon the assembly, and in a few moments an elderly member arose. "Brudder Pete," he said, "I reckin you mought as well gib out de hyme."

SECOND EXPOSITION: GRANDISON'S QUANDARY

GRANDISON PRATT was a colored man of about thirty, who, with his wife and two or three children, lived in a neat log cabin in one of the Southern States. He was a man of an independent turn of mind, and he much desired to own the house in which he lived and

the small garden-patch around it. This valuable piece of property belonged to Mr. Morris, and as it was an outlying corner of his large farm, he had no objection to selling it to Grandison, provided the latter could pay for it, but of this he had great doubts. The man was industrious enough, but he often seemed to have a great deal of difficulty about paying the very small rental charged for his place, and Mr. Morris, consequently, had well-grounded doubts about his ability to purchase it.

"But, sah," said Grandison, one day, when these objections had been placed before him, "I's been turnin' dis thing ober in my min' ober an' ober. I know jes how much I kin make, an' how much I's got to spend, an' how I kin save ter buy de house, an' if I agree to pay you so much money on such a day, an' so much on such anudder day, I's gwine ter do it. You kin jes put dat down, sah, for sartin shuh."

"Well, Grandison," said Mr. Morris, "I'll give you a trial. If, at the end of six months, you can pay me the first instalment, I'll have the necessary papers made out, and you can go on and buy the place, but if you are not up to time on the first payment, I want to hear no more about the purchase."

"All right, Mahs'r Morris," said Grandison. "If I gibs you my word ter pay de money on de fus' day ob October, I's gwine ter do it. Dat's sartin shuh."

Months passed on, and, although Grandison worked as steadily as usual, he found, toward the end of September, that, in the ordinary course of things, he would not be able to make up the sum necessary for the first payment. Other methods, out of the ordinary course, came into his mind, but he had doubts about

availing himself of them. He was extremely anxious to make up the amount due, for he knew very well that if he did not pay it on the day appointed he might bid farewell to his hope of becoming a free-holder. In his perplexity he resolved to consult Brother 'Bijah, the minister of the little church in the pine woods to which Grandison belonged.

"Now, look-a-heah, Brudder 'Bijah," said he, "wot's I gwine ter do 'bout dis bizness? I done promised ter pay dis money on de fus' day ob de comin' month, an' dar's six dollars ob it dat I ain't got yit."

"An' ain't dar any way ter git it?" asked 'Bijah.

"Yaas, dar's one way," said Grandison. "I's been turnin' dis matter ober an' ober in my min', an' dar's only one way. I mought sell apples. Apples is mighty skarse dis fall, an' I kin git two dollars a bar'l fer 'em in town. Now, if I was ter sell three bar'ls of apples I'd hab dat dar six dollars, sartin shuh. Don' you see dat, Brudder 'Bijah?"

"Dat's all cl'ar 'nuf," said the minister, "but whar you gwine ter git three bar'ls o' apples? You don' mean ter tell me dat you's got 'nuf apple-trees in your little gyardin fer ter shake down three bar'ls o' apples!"

"Now look-a-heah, Brudder 'Bijah," said Grandison, his eyes sparkling with righteous indignation, "dat's too much ter 'spec' ob a man who's got ter work all day ter s'port his wife an' chillun. I digs, an' I ploughs, an' I plants, an' I hoes. But all dem things ain't 'nuf ter make apple-trees grow in my gyardin like as dey was corn-field peas."

"Dat's so," said 'Bijah, reflectively. "Dat's too

much ter 'spec' ob any man. But how's you gwine ter sell de apples, if you ain't got 'em?"

"I's got ter git 'em," said Grandison. "Dar's apples 'nuf growin' roun,' an' not so fer away dat I can't tote 'em ter my house in a bahsket. It's pow'ful hard on a man wot's worked all day ter have ter tote apples ahfter night, but dar ain't no udder way ob gittin' dat dar money."

"I 'spec' de orchard whar you's thinkin' o' gwine is Mahs'r Morris's," said the minister.

"You don' s'pose I's gwine ter any ob dose low-down orchards on de udder side de creek, does ye? Mahs'r Morris has got de bes' apples in dis county. Dat's de kin' wot fetch two dollars a bar'l."

"Brudder Gran'son," said 'Bijah, solemnly, "is you min' runnin' on takin' Mahs'r Morris's apples inter town an' sellin' 'em?"

"Well, he gits de money, don't he?" answered the other, "an' if I don' sell his apples, 'taint no use sellin' none. Dem udder little nubbins roun' heah won't fetch no two dollars a bar'l."

"Dem ain't justifyin' deeds wot's runnin' in your mind," said 'Bijah. "Dey ain't justifyin'."

"Ob course," said Grandison, "dey wouldn't be justifyin' if I had de six dollars. But I ain't got 'em, an' I's promised ter pay 'em. Now, is I ter stick ter de truf, or isn't I?"

"Truf is mighty," said the preacher, "an' ought not ter be hendered from prevailin'."

"Dat's so! dat's so!" exclaimed Grandison. "You can't go ag'in' de Scripters. Truf *is* mighty, an' 'tain't fer pore human critters like us ter try ter upsot her.

Wot we're got ter do is ter stick ter her through thick an' thin."

"Ob course, dat's wot we oughter do," said 'Bijah, "but I can't see my way cl'ar ter you sellin' dem apples."

"But dar ain't nuffin else ter do!" exclaimed Grandison, "an' ef I don't do dat, away goes de truf, cl'ar out o' sight. An' wot sort o' 'ligion you call dat, Brudder 'Bijah?"

"'Tain't no kind at all," said 'Bijah, "fer we's bound ter stick ter de truf, which is de bottom cornerstone ob piousness. But dem apples don't seem ter git demselves straightened out in my min', Brudder Gran'son."

"It 'pears ter me, Brudder 'Bijah, dat you don' look at dem apples in de right light. If I was gwine ter sell 'em ter git money ter buy a lot o' spotted caliker ter make frocks fer de chillun, or eben ter buy two pa'rs o' shoes fer me an' Judy ter go ter church in, dat would be a sin, sartin shuh. But you done fergit dat I's gwine ter take de money ter Mahs'r Morris. If apples is riz, an' I gits two dollars an' a quarter a bar'l, ob course I keeps de extry quarter, which don' pay anyhow fer de trouble ob pickin' 'em. But de six dollars I gibs, cash down, ter Mahs'r Morris. Don' you call dat puffectly fa'r an' squar', Brudder 'Bijah?"

'Bijah shook his head. "Dis is a mighty dubersome question, Brudder Gran'son—a mighty dubersome question."

Grandison stood with a disappointed expression on his countenance. He greatly desired to gain from his minister sanction for the financial operation he had proposed. But this the solemn 'Bijah did not appear prepared to give. As the two men stood

together by the roadside, they saw, riding toward them, Mr. Morris himself.

"Now, den," exclaimed Grandison, "heah comes Mahs'r Morris, an' I's gwine ter put dis question to hisse'f. He oughter know how ter 'cide 'bout it, if anybody does."

"You ain't truly gwine ter put dat question ter him, is ye?" asked 'Bijah, quickly.

"No, sah," replied the other. "I's gwine ter put the case on a dif'rent show-p'int. But 'twill be the same thing as de udder."

Mr. Morris was a genial-natured man, who took a good deal of interest in his negro neighbors, and was fond of listening to their peculiar humor. Therefore, when he saw that Grandison wished to speak to him he readily pulled up his horse.

"Mahs'r Morris," said Grandison, removing his hat, "Brudder 'Bijah an' me has been argyin' on de subjick ob truf. An jes as you was comin' up I was gwine ter tell him a par'ble 'bout stickin' ter truf. An' if you's got time, Mahs'r Morris, I'd be pow'ful glad ter tell you de par'ble, an' let you 'cide 'tween us."

"Very well," said Mr. Morris, "go on with your parable."

"Dis yer par'ble," said Grandison, "has got a justifyin' meanin' in it, an' it's 'bout a b'ar an' a possum. De possum he was a-gwine out early in de mawnin' ter git a little corn fer his breakfus'—"

"Very wrong in the opossum," said Mr. Morris, "for I am sure he hadn't planted any corn."

"Well, den, sah," said Grandison, "p'r'aps 'twas akerns. But, anyway, afore he was out ob de woods he see a big ol' b'ar a-comin' straight 'long ter him. De

possum he ain't got no time ter climb a tree an' git out on de leetlest end ob a long limb, an' so he lay hese'f flat down on de groun' an' make b'lieve he's dead. When de ol' b'ar came up he sot down an' look at de possum. Fus' he turn his head on one side, an' den he turn his head on de udder, but he look at de possum all de time. D'rec'ly he gits done lookin', an' he says: 'Look-a-heah, possum, is you dead or is you libin'? If you's dead I won't eat you, fer I neber eats dead critters, but if you's libin', den I eats you fer my breakfus', fer I is b'ilin' hungry, not havin' had nuffin sence sun-up but a little snack dat I took afore I gwine out inter de damp air ob de mawnin'. Now, den, possum, speak out an' tell me, is you 'libe or is you dead?'

"Dat are question frew de possum inter a pow'ful sweat. If he told de truf an' said he was alibe, he knowed well 'nuf dat de b'ar would gobble him up quicker 'n if he'd been a hot ash-cake an' a bowl ob buttermilk. But if he said he was dead, so 's de b'ar wouldn't eat him, de b'ar, like 'nuf, would know he lied, an' would eat him all de same. So he turn de matter ober an' ober in his min', an' he wrastled wid his 'victions, but he couldn't come ter no 'clusion. 'Now, don' you t'ink,' said de b'ar, 'dat I's got time to sit here de whole mawnin', waitin' fer you ter make up your min' whether you's dead or not. If you don't 'cide pretty quick, I'll put a big rock atop o' you, an' stop fer you answer when I come back in de ebenin'.' Now, dis gib de possum a pow'ful skeer, an' 'twas cl'ar ter his min' dat he mus' 'cide de question straight off. If he tol' de truf, an' said he was alibe, he'd be eat up shuh, but if he said he was dead, de b'ar mought

b'lieve him. 'Twarn't very likely dat he would, but dar was dat one leetle chance, an' he done took it. 'I is dead,' says he. 'You's a long time makin' up your min' 'bout it,' says de b'ar. 'How long you been dead?' 'Sence day 'fore yestidday,' says de possum. 'All right!' says de b'ar, 'when dey've on'y been dead two or free days, an' kin talk, I eats 'em all de same.' An' he eat him up."

"And now, Grandison," said Mr. Morris, "where is the moral of that parable?"

"De moral is dis," said Grandison: "Stick ter de truf. If de possum had tol' de truf, an' said he was alibe, de b'ar couldn't eat him no more'n he did eat him—no b'ar could do dat. An' I axes you, Mahs'r Morris, don' dat par'ble show dat eb'rybody oughter stick ter de truf, no matter what happens?"

"Well, I don't think your moral is very clear," said Mr. Morris, "for it would have been about as bad for the possum one way as the other. But, after all, it would have been better for the little beast to tell the truth and die with a clear conscience."

"Dat's so!" cried Brother 'Bijah, speaking in his ministerial capacity. "De great thing in dis worl' is ter die wid a clear conscience."

"But you can't do dat," said Grandison, "if you let dis thing an' dat thing come in ter hinder ye. Now, dat's jes wot we's been disputin' 'bout, Mahs'r Morris. I 'clared dat we oughter stick ter de truf widout lookin' ter de right or de lef'. But Brudder 'Bijah, his min' wasn't quite made up on de subjick. Now, wot you say, Mahs'r Morris?"

"I say stick to the truth, of course," said Mr. Morris, gathering up his reins. "And, by the way, Grandison,

do you expect to make that payment on your place which is due next week?"

"Yaas, sah, sartin shuh," said Grandison. "I done tol' you I'd do it, Mahs'r Morris, an' I 'tends ter stick ter de truf.

"Now, den," continued Grandison, in a tone of triumph, when Mr. Morris had ridden away, "you see I's right in my 'clusions, and Mahs'r Morris 'grees with me."

"Dunno," said Brother 'Bijah, shaking his head. "Dis is a mighty dubersome question. You kep' dem apples cl'ar out o' sight, Brudder Gran'son—cl'ar out o' sight."

It was about a week after this, quite early in the morning, that Grandison was slowly driving into town with a horse and a wagon which he had borrowed from a neighbor. In the wagon were three barrels of fine apples. Suddenly, at a turn in the road, he was greatly surprised to meet Mr. Morris, riding homeward.

"What have you in those barrels, Grandison?" inquired his landlord.

"Dey's apples, sah," was the reply, "dat I's got de job ob haulin' ter town, sah."

Mr. Morris rode up to the wagon, and removed the piece of old canvas that was thrown over the tops of the barrels. There was no need of asking any questions. No one but himself, for many miles around, had "Belle-flowers" and "Jeannettes" like these.

"How much do you lack, Grandison," he said, "of making up the money you owe me to-morrow?"

"Six dollars, sah," said Grandison.

"Six dollars—three barrels. Very good," said Mr.

Morris. "I see you are determined to stick to the truth, Grandison, and keep your engagement. But I will trouble you to turn that wagon round and haul those apples to my house. And if you still want to buy the place, you can come on Monday morning and work out the balance you have to make up on the first instalment, and, after this, you can make all your payments in work. A day's labor is fair and plain, but your ways of sticking to the truth are very crooked."

It was not long after this that Grandison was ploughing in one of Mr. Morris's fields, when Brother 'Bijah came along and sat upon the fence.

"Brudder Gran'son," said he, when the ploughman had reached the end of the furrow and was preparing to turn, "jes you let your hoss res' a minnit till I tells you a par'ble."

"Wot par'ble?" said Grandison, in a tone of unconcern, but stopping his horse, all the same.

"Why, dis one," said 'Bijah. "Dar was an ol' mule, an' he b'longed ter a cullud man named Harris, who used ter carry de mail from de coht-house ter Cary's Cross-roads. De ol' mule was a pow'ful triflin' critter, an' he got lazier an' lazier, an' 'fore long he got so dreffle slow dat it tuk him more'n one day ter go from de coht-house ter de cross-roads, an' he allers come in de day ahfter mail-day, when de people was done gone home. So de cullud man Harris he says: 'You is too ol' fer ter carry de mail, you triflin' mule, an' I hain't got no udder use fer you.'

" So he put him in a gully-field, whar dar was nuffin but bar' groun' an' hogweed. Now, dar was nuffin in dis worl' dat triflin' mule hated so much as hogweed,

an' he says ter hese'f: 'I's boun' ter do somefin' better'n dis fer a libin.' I reckin I'll go skeer dat ol' Harris, an' make him gib me a feed o' corn.' So he jump ober de fence, fer he was spry 'nuf when he had a min' ter, an' he steals an ol' b'arskin dat he'd seen hangin' up in de store po'ch, an' he pretty nigh kivered himse'f all up wid it. Den he go down ter de pos'-office, whar de mail had jes come in. When dis triflin' ol' mule seed de cullud man Harris sittin' on de bottom step ob de po'ch, he begin to kick up his heels an' make all de noise he could wid he mouf. 'Wot's dat?' cried de cullud man Harris. 'I's a big grizzly b'ar,' said de mule, ''scaped from de 'nagerie when 'twas fordin' Scott's Creek.' 'When did you git out?' said de cullud man Harris. 'I bus' from de cage at half-pas' free o'clock dis ebenin'.' 'An' is you reely a grizzly b'ar?' 'Dat's de truf,' said de triflin' mule, 'an' I's pow'ful hungry, an' if you don' go git me a feed o' corn I'll swaller you down whole.' An' he begun to roar as like a grizzly b'ar as he knew how. 'Dat all de truf you tellin' me?' de cullud man Harris ask. 'Dat's all true as I's libin',' says de triflin' mule. 'All right, den,' says de cullud man Harris, 'if you kin come from de ford on Scott's Creek in a hour an' a half, you kin carry de mail jes as well as any udder mule, an' I's gwine ter buy a big cart-whip, an' make you do it. So take off dat b'arskin, an' come 'long wid me.' So you see, Brudder Gran'son," continued 'Bijah, "dar's dif'rent kinds ob truf, an' you's got ter be mighty 'tic'lar wot kind you sticks ter."

"Git up," said Grandison to his drowsy horse, as he started him on another furrow.


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